Achitophel,

14. 5. OR 90

The Picture of a wicked Politician.

Divided into three parts.

A Treatiſe preſented heretofore in three Sermons to the Univerſity of OXFORD, and now publiſhed.

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Coll. Emman. Cantab.

To the moſt Reverend Father in God, *James* by the grace of Arch-Biſhop of *Ardmagh*, and Primate of all *Ireland.*

Moſt Reverend Father in God,

MY beſt endeavours long ſince engaged to your Graces ſervice have never yet found themſelves ſo propitiouſly befriended by occaſion, as to make the World the witneſſe of their ſincerity:

my deepe apprehenſion of your Gracious favour, which firſt invited me into this Kingdom, ſeconded by my inbred diſpoſition more ambitious to expreſſe a thankefull heart, than directed to private ends, could not ſleepe without ſome publicke acknowledgement. But it is the greateſt unhappineſſe of thankfull, induſtry to entreate no better Orators to plead in her behalfe than the tongue or pen; both of which oftner ſubiect themſelves to the command of ſycophanticke

Para-

Paraſites than obſervant friends, and ſuffer themſelves ſooner to be armed againſt worth, than drawne in defence of ingenuity; But with me the caſe ſtands otherwiſe, as with one whoſe words or writings can never ſufficiently enable themſelves, either to commend the ſincerity of mine owne affection, or to flatter the eminency of your deſerving: The one being ſet above expreſſion, the other of envy or adulation. Sorry I am, that this deformed Childe of

my industry presuming rather on the precedency of birth, than worth should before others of his brethren (worthier in my choyce) adventure to aske your Graces *Patronage. But opportunity in this can challenge an advantage before worth, in that she can as well improve the worst, as crowne the best. Could I have proportioned this poore present, either to your* Graces *Iudicious acceptance, or any affectionate observance, it had cast it selfe into another*

mould

mould, than the modell of this ſlender Treatiſe, readier to ſhrinke from his Patrons learned cenſure, than able to ſtand out in the Authors approbation. But ſuch as it is, I humbly preſent, with my ſelfe, unto your gracious acceptance; wiſhing it no other deſtiny than my ſelfe, whom you, ſince my arrivall, having cheriſhed in your favour, have confirmed your grateſull Votary. The Subiect I here offer to your view, containes the pith and matter of three Sermons,

preſented heretofore to my Mother the Vniverſity of Oxford, *in whoſe name they will no doubt finde an eaſier paſſage into your* Graces *protection. Not that I hold theſe Rivolets worthy ſo copious and ſweete a fountaine whence they ſprung: but that your* Grace *having often honoured our ancient Mother, as well with your acceptable preſence as learned exerciſe; cannot but caſt an indulgent eye upon her unworthieſt Children. The Sceane where-*

in

in I have bounded my Diſ-
courſe preſents unto your
Cenſure a ſacred Tragedy, con-
ſiſting of foure chiefe Actors,
viz. David *an annoynted*
King : Abſolon *an ambiti-*
ous Prince : Achitophel
a wicked Politician, and
Cuſhay *a loyall ſubiect* : *a*
paſſage of Hiſtory, for variety
pleaſant, for inſtruction uſeful,
for event admirable. If the
Penne-man climbe not the
height of ſuch a Subiect, I
ſhall not, I hope, fall be-
low the meaſure of your

graci-

gracious acceptance: In which confidence I ſhall finde my ambition abundantly ſatisfied, and reſt,

Your Graces in all Chriſtian duty to be commanded,

NATHANAEL CARPENTER.

Achi-

Achitophel,

OR,

The wicked Polititian.

2 SAMUEL Chap. 17. Ver. 23.

And when Achitophel *saw that his counsell was not followed, he saddled his asse, and arose, and gate home, and set his house in order, and hanged himselfe, and was buried in the sepulcher of his Fathers.*

The first part.

THE chiefest objects whereon *Treason* sets it selfe a worke are *Ambition* and *Discontent*; whereof the former is wont

wont to faſhion the greateſt hopes out of the leaſt advantage; the other ſeemes like tinder to catch fire at the firſt touch, and turnes the leaſt indignity into the greateſt indignation. This was well knowne to that grand Polititian *Achitophel*, who finding *Abſolon*, *Davids* ſon, affected with either malady, determined to apprehend the leaſt opportunity to execute his owne malice, and *Davids* ruine. *David* hee a long time hàted (as is probably conjectured by ſome interpreters) for the murder of *Urias* his neare affine; yet ſubtilty and ſecrecy, the two handmayds of humane policy, ſtood alwayes betwixt his hypocriſie and the Kings ſuſpicion. *Abſolon* hee found in the heate and pride of his youth above meaſure ambitious of his Fathers Scepters, extremely discontent with his foule diſgrace, and long baniſhment: The one pointed

him

him out the way to Supremacy, the other to revenge, eaſily perſwading his erroneous judgment, that it ſeemed too ſmall a ſatisfaction for *Abſolon*, againe to be entertained as a ſubject too great a curteſie for *David* to live a King. Every houre which addes to the length of his Fathers reigne, ſeemes to borrow yeers from the thred of his expected Royalty, and Juſtice her ſelfe ſeemes to claime a part in his trayterous ambition; ſuch is the prerogative of ſelfe-bred actions to ſhut out prejudice, and promiſe to themſelves as much ſucceſſe as they finde excuſe. Here *policy* taught *Achitophel* to ſtrike whilſt the Iron was hot, and joyne iſſue with the firſt advantage.

Time, the beſt moderator of haſty humours, might perhaps have ſmoothed over *Abſolons* guilt, or have ſlacked *Davids* indignation; and occaſions of this kind at firſt let ſlip, are

after-

afterwards rather wiſht thã found. What he long plotted is now come to execution, and his expectation ſo long groaning with ambition and revenge, at length rackt on the laſt extremity. What his policy in proofe deſerved, it promiſed it ſelfe in mens opinions, and himſelfe the firſt projector, he found entertained the chiefe Actor in this conſpiracy.

Nothing now ſeemes wanting to the project but an open attempt to invade applauſe, and hoſtile preparations muſt ſhew themſelves in a readineſſe, rather for formality than oppoſition: as though he had already wonne as much, as expectation, and victory ſeemed already legible in *Abſolons* gracious preſence and the peoples forward acclamations. But ſuch conſultations never ſpeed well, where God is excluded the Counſell-table, and *Hope*, which uſually

ſually flatters the ambitious with the beſt ſucceſſe, oft-times betrayes them to the worſt.

David all this while lies ſecure, as one who out of a fatherly ingenuity might ſooner expect the hoſtile invaſion of a forraine Enemy, than the ſecret ſtratagems of ſo deare a friend: For what indulgent Parent could feare his owne overthrow to ſpring out of his owne bowels? Or there to finde the ruine of himſelfe, where he hoped to erect the Trophy of his name and memory? But treaſon at length early knocking at his doores, awakes his ſleeping jealouſie; and time it is to fly unto forreigne ſuccours, where he findes his owne ſonnes and ſubjects the forgers of ſeditious treaſon and unnaturall rebellion.

But that great Counſeller which turneth humane wiſedome into folly, and directs all purpoſes to his owne

owne ends, is not wanting to his ſervant *David*, making earneſt interceſſion: *Chuſay* is ſecretly ſuborned by *David* under the pretence of love and ſervice, as a ſuppoſed friend, but diſguiſed enemy, to creep into *Abſolons* boſome, and oppoſe *Achitophel* that tranſcendent Politician: *Achitophel*, who as an Oracle of God, had for his deepe wiſedome hitherto paſſed currant, is now ſhut out, and *Chuſay* this new counſellor admitted audience. Here beginnes the dawning of *Davids* happy deliverance, and *Achitophels* deſerved tragedy; for as the diſtemper of our firſt concoction, (as *Naturaliſts* obſerve) is ſeldome or never corrected in the ſecond; ſo the firſt groundworke in State-policy, ill layd or tempered, can afterwards ſcarce promiſe a reformation. But Princes actions are commonly confin'd to no other lawes than their owne wils,

wils, and bootleſſe it is for *Achitophel* to give further counſel where he wants perſwaſion: Deſpaire and indignation are at hand to ſecond his repulſe: and nothing now ſeemes left him for refuge (ſo farre as the eye of his worldly policy could diſcerne) but the preventing of *Davids* officers in his ſhameleſſe execution: *And when* Achitophel *ſaw that his counſell was not followed, &c.*

2. This parcell of Scripture containing a briefe hiſtory of *Achitophels* laſt *actions* and *end*, naturally ſhoots into theſe two branches: firſt, his *provocation*: ſecondly, his *action*; the provocation was the neglect of his counſell, expreſſed in the former words of my Text: [*And when* Achitophel *ſaw that his counſell was not followed:*] his actions are decyphered in the latter clauſe, [*He ſadled his Aſſe, and aroſe,*

roſe, &c.] in the *provocation* or motive we may obſerve theſe two circumſtances. Firſt, what *Achitophels* counſell was, and wherein it conſiſted: Secondly, how, and which way it was defeated. To begin with the firſt, we may reduce his policy into two heads: for it conſiſted, either in his apt choice or wiſe direction: the former was evident in that he tooke advantage of ſuch a *Subject* to countenance his rebellion, who amongſt all the children of *Iſrael* was the likelieſt to goe the fartheſt. *Abſolons* birth, feature, plauſibility, and high ſpirit ſeemed to ſpeake him a king at firſt ſight; as though nature and induſtry, policy and valour ſtood in competition which ſhould challenge moſt in his advancement. In the firſt place to examine his *birth*, wee ſhall finde him a Kings ſon: and although the ſecond of his Fathers race, yet the firſt

firſt in the peoples hope. Of the eldeſt little mention is left us ſave the name, as of one by impotence of nature, or diſaſterous influence of the Starres, halfe canceld out of the catalogue of *Davids* ſonnes: beſides the claime and title to his Fathers Kingdome, but newly began, and not yet eſtabliſht on ſucceſſion, gave no ſmall encouragement to his high ambition: where birth-right affords no certaine challenge to Kingly dignity, and the fathers choice in deſigning out his ſucceſſor is ſcarſe reputed warrantable, what other obſtacle can ſtand betwixt him and ſoveraignty but Gods immediate wil or the peoples ſuffrage? The former (as it ſeemes) he little regarded, as one who either doubted of his providence, or ſhewed himſelfe too confident of his connivence; the latter, as a matter out of queſtion, ſeemed ſooner found than ſought:

ſought: as though opinion, which had ſo long fawned on his worth, could as eaſily perſwade their ſuffrage, as command their ſervice. Had yet any ſenſe of Religion, or care of the publicke good invaded the minds either of young *Abſolon* the Prince, or *Achitophel* the old counſellor, they might firſt of ſome Prophet or other have enquired Gods ſecret purpoſe of depreſſing *David*, and exalting *Abſolon*; or at leaſt have eſteemed hereditary ſucceſſion the beſt challenge: well might Gods almighty hand diſdaine oppoſition which never yet met reſiſtance, and common equity have ſtampt that currant, which cuſtomary right and the law of nature had already eſtabliſht amongſt moſt Nations. But their deſigne is not grounded upon Gods Law, or Natures priviledge, ut their owne ſeeming advantage; as though the di-

vine

vine counſell ought to ſtoope to humane policy, and nature forſake the ſcene where worldly wiſedome comes in action.

Behold here the firſt and chiefeſt character of a worldly-wiſe Politician, who cares little how great a rupture he makes through Gods ſacred lawes and common equity, to meete with his owne advantage, chuſing rather to loſe his ſoule, than his wicked purpoſe; as one by Patent allowed to diſpence with any Obligation of Conſcience and religion; hence may eaſily be diſcovered the errour of vulgar judgements, who meaſuring inward ſufficiencies by the improvement of our outward fortunes, repute thoſe men wiſeſt which riſe higheſt: bnt true wiſedome, in whoſe ſcale conſiſts the choyce of the beſt ends, and fitteſt meanes, hath taught us rather to

entertaine

entertaine than ſerve preferments; and prize the quiet calme of a ſettled Concience, before the ſtormy gueſts of ambitious Greatneſſe.

Tis not the want of wit to project, but of wickedneſſe to practiſe, which keepes vertue poore, and deſert unregarded; neither are great advancements the uſuall badges of great worth.

3. The ſecond thing whereof *Achitophel* tooke advantage in *Abſolons perſon*, was his faire and comely *feature*. *Abſolon*, amongſt all the Children of *Iſrael*, was reputed the faireſt: His lovely viſage, diſheveld haire, the ſeemely ſymmetry and proportion of all his parts, were as ſo many ſilent Orators to beſpeake applauſe, and perſwade affection. Our friends and foes we ſeldome owe to choyce, but Nature which ſtampes in every mans face

face her ſpeciall characters of beauty and deformity, of love and hatred, ordaining them rather commanders of our fancy than ſervants to our diſcretion: whence *Ariſtotle* had good cauſe to make this comely feature of the body one of the complements of humane happineſſe; as that which gives the habite of our vertues a more glorious luſtre, and opens a more ſpeedy paſſage to *Heroicke Actions.*

What greater motive could have happened to a ſeditious multitude, whoſe affections led rather by ſenſe than reaſon, are better taught to fawne on ſhewes than ſubſtance, and ſwallow the moſt poyſonous drugges in golden Pilles. Nothing more dangerous than painted ſinne, and ugly vice couched under the protection of a comely Countenance, will loſe the name, and ſeem

a vertue : ſo much is the bewitching power of a beauteous perſonage to inchant the wiſeſt judgement, that perſwaſion is of oftner found in the Orator, than the Argument, as though his lookes went as harbingers before his language, to prepare a roome and entertaine attention. Of theſe eminent gifts of Nature notwithſtanding not granted to our free choyce, but rather truſted to our husbandry, no queſtion but Almighty God the lender will expect an intereſt. He that either hides his talent in the ground, or miſpends his portion, ſhall finde the reward of a faithleſſe ſervant; much more ſuch graceleſſe Tenants, who turne their endowments to their worſt uſes, and make Gods munificent gifts the meanes and groundworke of wicked and irreligious actions. Where God ſowes he expects his harveſt in the ſame kinde; and no graine

graine ſo meane in our eſtimation out of which in proportion he requires not a timely crop. But where he findes our induſtry ſlacke in performance of this duty, or our malice oppoſite to his profit, he commonly workes his owne ends out of our iniquities. and what parts and endowments we abuſe to ſinne, hee juſtly directs unto revenge.

4. A third advantage in *Abſolons* perſon ſuggeſted to *Achitophels* obſervation, was his faire carriage and popular plauſibility. A ſweete and courteous deportment ſeaſoned with morality, and religion, never wants deſerved commendation; as the ſureſt character of an ingenuous diſpoſition, and the moſt powerfull ſervant of honeſt policy. For as in our moſt religious actions, wee ſhould ſtudy rather to profit, than to pleaſe our Auditors: yet who never affects

to pleaſe, ſhall ſeldome have the happineſſe to profit : ſo much much more in civill affaires the beſt improvement is popular eſtimation, and vertue, though never ſo eminent, ſhall ſcarce be reputed currant, if not ſtampt by applauſe, or crowned with common approbation.

—— *Non te quæſiveris extra.*

ſeemes rather an axiome of a ſpeculative and retired *Stoicke*, than a practick *Statiſt*. An upright and honeſt man (I confeſſe) would rather finde himſelfe at home in his owne conſcience, than ſeeke himſelfe abroad in other mens opinions : as one, whoſe firſt care ought to be to forme himſelfe to Gods will, and his owne content; his ſecond, to husband his meanes to mens applauſe ; yet comes this farre

farre ſhort to diſprove an affable and kinde behaviour, or countenance a harſh or *Cynicall* diſpoſition. Had no other affection than this, poſſeſſed the ſoule of *Abſolon*, or in him preſented it ſelfe to *Acitophels* obſervation, diſcretion, might have pleaded in the behalfe of the former, and honeſty of the latter, and neither have wanted its deſerved commendation; the one perhaps might have beene thought ambitious, to inherit aſwel the peoples love, as his fathers vertues: the other to have applauded his Princes happineſſe in the peoples love. Nevertheleſſe popularity at the beſt is a favour, which wiſe and diſcreete ſubjects ſooner winne than affect: beginning uſually with the Princes jealouſie, and ending with the owners ruine, the defect might better become a Subject, the exceſſe

a King : neither ever had thoſe *Athenian Oſtraciſmes* found place in Juſtice, had not popular greatneſſe threatned the ſtate with danger or diſſolution. How much more dangerous ſhall wee eſteeme this popularity of *Abſolon* ſpringing from a rotten and corrupted heart, managed by wicked means, and directed to a treacherous conſpiracy?

Three eſpeciall ſtratagems were here put in practice, which might well ſeeme faſhioned in *Achitophels* forge : For the ſending of *Abſolon* for *Achitophel* to *Hebron*, excludes not a former conſultation ; neither is it probable, he would ſo farre have truſted him with his ſecret counſailes, had he not firſt found him inclining to his faction.

The firſt engine of his ſeditious purpoſe, was his gloſſing and fine comple-

plement both in words and geſture, whereby he was ſaid to *ſteale away the hearts of the people from his father David:* he uſually ſtood in the palace gate, he obſerved the approach of ſuiters, he examined their particular grievances, enquired the place of their abode: finally he kiſſed and embraced them, *O* (ſaith he) *that I were made Iudge in the Land, that I might heare every mans caſe, and doe Iuſtice.*

What zealous ſubject almoſt out of the ſeeming ſimplicity of his words would not ſwell with expectation, and become as prodigall in his hopes as the other in his promiſes? The diſtance betweene Princes and Private men makes us often over-valew courteſies, and the indiſcovery of ſuch mens natures cauſeth divers times their worſt actions to carry the beſt conſtruction: but great promi-

ſes are commonly ſeconded by ſmal or ſlow performance ; and an eaſie matter it is to bee over prodigall on the ſcore , where we never intend a payment.

To boaſt wiſely of our actions and ſufficiencies, howſoever oppoſite to ſimple modeſty or plaine dealing honeſty, was never accounted a *ſolœciſme* in the jugling art of *humane policy*. But admit *Abſolon* in this caſe had promiſed to himſelfe as much as the people , and ſuffered his confidence to ſpread her wings beyond his abilities : yet ſerves this little, to excuſe his action from unnaturall *diſobedience* , or masked *treachery*. It was the part of a ſhameleſſe *Cham* to be an induſtrious ſpectator of his fathers nakedneſſe : of rayling *Rabſhake*, or curſing *Shimei* to divorce him from his ſubjects hearts : Nature would have perſwaded a gracious

cious child with *Noahs* two modeſt ſonnes to have lookt awry, or gone backward, no ſooner to ſee ere hee could hide his fathers ſhame. Allegeance might have inſtructed a loyall ſubject, to prize his Soveraignes credit before his owne and drowne his greateſt honours in his Princes ſervice.

But ſetting aſide theſe neare and high relations of a ſonne to his father, or a ſubject to his Prince; the diviſion and divorce of friends to a generous temper, even amongſt the Heathen themſelves, hath alwayes ſeemed a wicked revenge to baſe ambition. Honour ſeldome beſtowes her favours but on ſuch as winne them in open field; and Heroicke ſpirits have alwayes choſen rather dearely to buy than baſely to ſteale a victory. To ſteale away the hearts of our friends favours more of a fleering paraſite

than a wiſe Politician, and to ſeek ſecret ambuſhes, in caſe of open triall, argues rather ther the weaknes of our cauſe, than the ſtrength of our diſcretion.

Nevertheleſſe this ſeemed a good ground for *Abſolon* to ſet, and *Achitophel* to worke on: And little can true wiſedome or religion perſwade in the *Reare* where wicked *policy* commands the *Vant-guard*. A ſecond ſtratagem put in practice by *Abſolon*, and perhaps plotted by *Achitophel*, to augment his owne plauſibility, was publickly to ſlander his Fathers government with injuſtice & oppreſſion: The ſame Art which taught him to flatter his inferiours, inſtructed him the way to calumniate his ſuperiours: So neare are theſe two oppoſite vices knit together in a wicked cauſe. *See* (quoth *Abſolon*) (after examination of each ſutour) *thy*

caſe

caſe is iuſt and good, but there is no man deputed of the King to heare thee.

David began now decline, aſwell in ſtrength as government: Age and Diſeaſe commonly grow together, and where the Maſter begins once to droope, the ſervants proove either careleſſely negligent, or lawleſſely inſolent.

Theſe inconveniences perhaps admitted by *Davids* Officers, and obſerved by *Abſolon*, rendred him obvious to exception. Greateſt places are commonly ſubject to the greateſt cenſures: But when Almighty God was never wanting to *David*, I cannot imagine *David* to be much wanting unto his people: And although Strength and Valour, the darlings of his youth, began in him to faint, yet wiſedome and experience, the children of his riper age, ſtept in to undertake his

his quarrell. No otherwiſe then can we interpret this exception of *Abſolon* againſt his father, than a malicious ſlander, deviſed for no other end than to make him odious, and himſelfe acceptable; which hee by ſo much the more hoped eaſie to effect, by how much he ſaw the giddy multitude (as at all times ſo) eſpecially in this declining age of *David*, as deſirous of Novelty as ſubject to diſcontent.

The beſt governours ſeldome pleaſe long, and the worſt may for a time: worth is ſeldome ſo eminent as in the abſence; and the beſt Magiſtrates like the Images of *Brutus* and *Caſſius*, (related by *Tacitus*) ſeeme then moſt glorious when they are moſt wanting. Envy and Detraction, like two venomous Serpents, lurke alwaies in the paths of Iuſtice; and the beſt Rulers ſeldome finde the freeſt

paſſage

paſſage. He that goes about to perſwade a multitude, they are not ſo well governed as they ought to be, ſhall ſooner want argument than attention.

The reaſon whereof (as a learned man hath obſerved) is becauſe the abuſes and corruptions in every State moſt inevitable, are for the moſt part ſenſible to vulgar capacities. But the hindrances of reformation onely apparent to men of experienced judgments. As eaſie was it here for *Abſolon* to ſlander as to ſpeake; his eyes could no ſooner open, but eſpy ſome object or other to animate his owne projects, or the peoples diſcontent. Such is the boundleſſe malice of baſe informers with the venome of their aſpick tongues to poiſon our ſincereſt actions, and preſent as in a perſpective the leaſt mites and mole-hils of our imperfections

like

like huge and mighty Mountaines. This found *David* in the midſt of a calme and ſetled State, when miſchiefe had ſcarce yet knowne her owne ſtrength, nor time as yet teemed with all the engines of graceleſſe villany. What then ſhall wee now expect in theſe *dog-dayes* of the worlds declining age, wherein malicious detraction is eſteemed the quinteſſence of wit, and an ingenuous acknowledgment of mens good deſerving, accounted too great a courteſie? Surely the beſt revenge I can here invent for innocence, can be no other than *preces* and *lachrymæ*, the armour of a Chriſtian and conſtant reſolution of the ſweet *Pſalmiſt*, *I will pray yet againſt their wickednesse*.

The third and greateſt impoſture *Abſolon* practiſed to make himſelfe plauſible, was the pretence of *Religion*: A vow he pretended at leaſt,

to..

to have made of his returne to *Hebron*, and there praiſing God after his ſafe returne to *Ieruſalem*. *David* is ſollicited to conſent unto his journey; neither could ſuch a petition brooke a deniall, which comes uſhered in under the ſhew of a religious office. *Hebron* ſeemed to *David* a place for ſacrifice, to *Abſolon* for conſpiracy: *Ieruſalem* was too neare his fathers ſight, or rather too farre from his treacherous purpoſe to admit of ſuch a wicked Conventicle. The meeting of ſuch Conſpirators ſo neare the Court, might ſoone have opened the eyes of ſleeping jealouſie, and betrayed the treaſon to diſcovery: *Davids* countenance might perhaps have danted the courage of his friends, or have wonne their loves: And leaſt the peoples affection to *Abſolon* ſhould grow cold in his abſence, he leaves behind him his Paraſites to ſolicite his

his cauſe, and at his approach to give the ſignall. Moreover, to ſtrengthen himſelfe the better againſt publick hoſtility or private miſtakes, hee carries with him a garriſon from *Ieruſalem* to defend his perſon, and ſends for *Achitophel* to *Hebron* to direct his counſell. Nothing but the pretence of *Religion*, could be thought a vizard to hide the face of this dangerous conſpiracy from the ſight of ſuſpicion. Deceit never thrives better, than when ſhe leaſt ſeemes her ſelfe: and vice ſeldome dares to ſhew her ſelfe in publick, unleſſe ſhe ſteale the robes of vertue, and actuate her ſelfe with ſly hypocriſie. *Sathan* transformes himſelfe to an Angell of light, when hee intends the greateſt miſchiefe, and inſtructs his diſciples in the like policy.

This hath beene the devills ſhift

and

and practice in all Ages; neither ever comes wickedneſſe better armed than with the ſhew of ſeeming ſanctity. *Ieroboam*, the ſonne of *Nebat*, who made *Iſrael* to ſin, had no other pretence than *Religion* to withdraw the tenne Tribes from *Ieruſalem* by ſetting up a new Idolatry. The *Scribes* and *Phariſes* in the New *Teſtament*, who under colour of *Faſting* and long *Prayer*, devoured widdows houſes, profeſſed the more rigorous and ſtricteſt obedience of the *Law*. Amongſt the three Sects in *Ieruſalem* in the time of the ſiege by *Titus* and *Veſpaſian*, *Ioſephus* obſerved thoſe to have beene the moſt notoriouſly wicked, who tearmed themſelves the *zealous*. But alas! *Pandora's* boxe was not yet empty: the moſt of evills was reſerved to theſe laſt and worſt times, wherein the greateſt ſinnes are accounted

Articles of *Faith*, and a ſincere profeſſion ſtiled *Hereſie*. *Ignatius* had not yet ſent his brood into the world with the Popes Patent, as ſo many *Pedlers* to ſell *damnation*: nor the *Tridentine Councell* concluded that Idolatry and Superſtition ſhould paſſe for true *Religion*: But ſince the approach of this *Meduſa's* head, the World ſeemes to have ſuffered a fatall *Metamorphoſis*, and wonders to finde her ſelfe ſo groſſe a changeling. Could our ſmall ſcantling of time diſpenſe ſo farre as the diſcovery of the *Roman Church*, we ſhould finde their whole *Religion* to be little other than a *politick hypocriſie*, directed to nothing elſe but gaine or greatneſſe: pretending nothing but Piety, profeſſing little elſe than malice or prophaneneſſe. What vulgar judgment can interpret otherwiſe of their *Pedlers pack* of *Indulgences*,

gences, and ſundry other ſuperſtitious juglings, but as of a meere merchandiſe of ſoules, wherein every graceleſſe *Parricide* as in a common *Market*, at the hands of a mercenary *Prieſt* may cheapen and buy his owne ſalvation? Had all the *Achitophels* or *Abſolons* in the world loſt their politick inventions, they might ſuppoſe finde them againe improoved in this *State-Religion*. No diſunion of the Church ſo ſmall, which their rigorous conſtituti ns pronounce not *Hereſie*: no ſinne ſo heynous, for whi h their *Pope* dares not grant a diſpenſation: as though ſanctity conſiſted not in the internall diſpoſition of the man, but in the outward conformity of the *Church*: and *Piety* were pinned on the ſleeve of worldly policy. This politick ſin of *hypocriſie* I no ſooner loſe among the *Romaniſts*, than I find againe amongſt our home-bred

Sciſma-

Sciſmaticks: A ſect of men I confeſſe, with whom I ſhould hardly grapple, ſtood they not armed in my way: How much the odious name of a *Puritane* hath abuſed many a ſincere Chriſtian, we may learne by the writings of *Becanus* the *Ieſuite*, who hath paralleld our *Puritanes* in *England*, with the *Huguenots* of *France*, and the *Calviniſts* of *Germany*: Or not to goe ſo farre abroad, we may well ſee in ſome of our owne mungrell *Divines*, who as it were betwixt hawke and buzzard, can ſee nicely to diſtinguiſh betwixt a *Puritane* in *opinion*, and a *Puritane* in *diſcipline*: and have taught the name contrary to the firſt inſtitution, ſo farre to enlarge it ſelfe, that a *Proteſtant* muſt make a hard ſhift, either by *Popery* or *Arminianiſme* to ſave himſelfe harmeleſſe. But with ſuch mens humours I never ſided,

ſided, to whom I profeſſe my ſelfe as oppoſite in Affection as Opinion. Nevertheleſſe I have obſerved in the world a ſort of people, of a malignant ſpirit, envying in others what they want in themſelves; having commonly neither will to learne, nor wit to teach; neither humility to obey, nor diſcretion to command: Yet for ſooth will they ſeeme ſo preciſe and contemptuous of other men, as if *Religion* muſt be quoted in their lookes, and *Sanctity* were onely engaged to their ſervice. Theſe can ſooner eſpy a *Mote* in other mens eyes, than a *beame* in their owne; as though *Conſcience* were ſet to the height of their ſpleene, and *Zeale* were never taught any language but detraction. Sometimes like thoſe ancient *Andabates*, they fight with their eyes ſhut, ſtriking the man that ſtands next, or like unskilfull

skilfull Gunners discharge their shot ere they approach the marke: other times perhaps they take their ayme; yet so, as they seeme to mistake the man for the matter, as if they intended to spare the vice, and wound the person. Hence are *Pulpits* become like *Roman Pasquils*, stuck full of malicious slanders and infamous *libells*, apter to disturbe the passion, than informe the conscience. But such fiery spirits I carelesly passe over, scarce worth a Schollers pen: in whose greatest downfell can scarse be hoped the honour of a victory. But having dwelt so long on this last circumstance, I must (leaving many matters behinde) follow my first man *Achitophel* observing *Absolon*.

5. The fourth and last advantage observed by *Ochitophel* in *Absolons* disposition, was his stout courage and manly resolution: what greater argu-

argument of valour, than to rouze a *Lyon* in open chaſe, and promiſe to himſelfe a paſſage to victory through the jawes of danger, and depoſition of a lawfull King? *Davids* fortunate ſucceſſe he might well have read in *Goliahs* overthrow, and the yoake impoſed on the furious *Philiſtines*. Time had not yet razed the Trophy's of his triumphant youth, nor age cancelled from his countenance the Characters of his undaunted courage, the ſubverſion of a ſtately kingdom was never eſteemed an eaſie conqueſt; and Soveraignty ſeemes a Center, unto which Providence hath chalked out the lines of few mens ambition. 'Tis more than one *Heſperian* Dragon of difficulty and diſaſter, which is ſet to guard this *golden Tree*; and what combate can be expected, but of ſuch a Captaine, whoſe leaſt feare is his greateſt

teſt danger? Yet *Abſolon* engaged by *Achitophels* advice, undertakes the combate: *Abſolons* ſtout heart gives ſuddaine fire to his ambition; and *Achitophels* counſell ſtands in readineſſe to back and ſtrengthen his ambitious courage: the one to act, the other to project, the means his advancement. Strength and policy, which ſeldome ſhake hands, are here accorded, or at leaſt, for a time they will entertaine a truce: *Achitophel* being confident enough of his counſaile, required no fitter inſtrument to actuate his malice than *Abſolons* couragious reſolution; knowing right well that nothing could prove more prejudiciall to *State* than *armed madneſſe*.

This is no ſmall worke of worldly policy to ſtand aloofe, and give ayme to wicked purpoſes, and abuſe the haſty humours of hot ſpirits to their owne advantage.

Which

Which may be well obſerved in our latter *Machevillians*, who have delivered this precept as a principle : *Make no difference between an evill ſervant and a good ; but uſe them both to thy owne ends.* *Cateline* thirſting for nothing more than the ruine of his Country, and expiation of his diſgrace received from the Senate, could make uſe as well of the pride of *Lentulus*, as the raſh valour of *Cethegus* : The high blood of the one , and the fiery ſpirit of the other, ſerved him to good purpoſe : the one to countenance , the other to animate his wicked action : In like ſort the *Perſian* Nobility (as wee read in *Zenophon*) enraged againſt *Artaxerxes* their King, ſought occaſion to ſide with the valour of the *Grecians*, and ſtirre up the high ſpirit of *Cyrus* the younger brother to revenge himſefe againſt the elder.

The faireſt colours are ſubject to the deepeſt ſtaines, and the moſt free and eminent diſpoſitions are commonly obvious to the greateſt alterations, and ſuffer the greateſt to be ſooneſt poiſoned, if once tempted with vaine-glory or diſcontent.

No marvaile then if the ſonnes of *Achitophel* ſurviving in our times, inſtructed by their Fathers counſaile, take advantage to worke their owne ends out of other mens diſcontented paſſion, If a ſearch were made, ſome (I feare) would bee found amongſt us as farre tranſcending *Achitophel* in malice, as perchance they come ſhort of him in wit and policy; who daily labour to faſten on their aſſociates the badge of their owne virulent diſpoſition: for which perhaps, beſides the glory of their own ſhame, they cannot, with *Achitophel*, ſo much

much as pretend a cauſe, or deviſe an end. But ſuch men ſhall ſurely anſwer aſwell for their owne ſeducements, as other mens tranſgreſſion; neither ſhall our faults herein be reputed leſſe than the intereſt we challenge in our brothers friendſhip. It is the part of the fouleſt Spider out of the faireſt flowers to ſucke poyſon; of induſtrious Bees out of ſtinking Hemlock to gather honey: And thoſe who would rather be accounted *Bees* than *Spiders*, ſhould rather labour to improve the worſt humours to ſome good temper, than pervert the beſt into ungodly actions. In the former we ſhould follow Gods owne example, who directs and diſpoſes wicked mens actions to his owne good purpoſes; in the latter, the Divels, who takes occaſion out of the moſt ſacred things to worke miſchiefe.

Hitherto (beloved) have we taken a ſurvey of *Achitophels* wicked policy, in electing a fit ſubject, and apprehending of his beſt opportunities for the treaſon. The next poynt left to our examination, is his *Direction*; the which, while I according to my ſmall ſcantling of time, and your patience (I feare already tyred) ſhall ſtrive to open, my ſmall inſight in worldly Policy ſhall (I hope) excuſe my errors, or at leaſt the diſcourſe of ſo great a miſchiefe deſerve your beſt attention.

6. Thus long have we beheld *Achitophel*, as in his private ſtudy, deſigning out a fit ſubject, whereby to worke his revenge on *David*. We are now to obſerve him ſitting in counſaile, and inſtructing *Abſolon*: The advice he gave, wee finde are two-fold:

The firſt, *Subordinate* and *prepara-*

paratory to ſtrengthen the *Faction.*

The ſecond, *laſt* and *principall*, to execute the action, and ſecure the ſucceſſe.

In the former he counſailes *Abſolon* to goe in, and abuſe his fathers Concubines: *Goe in* (quoth he) *to the fathers Concubines, whom he hath left to keepe the houſe, and when all Iſrael ſhall heare that thou art abhorred of thy Father, the hands of all that are with thee ſhall bee ſtrong*: In which counſaile wee may obſerve a double project; firſt. in ſecuring his owne, and his friends eſtate: ſecondly, in uniting the people more firmely to *Abſolons* obedience: Neither in this ſtept he beſides his policy; he ſerved himſelfe firſt, and his maſter no otherwiſe than for himſelfe; & thought that counſaile loſt, as ill beſtowed on *Abſolon*, wherein he

could not promiſe himſelfe either ſafety or advancement. He thought it ill ſiding with a doubtfull rebell, or inconſtant friend. *Abſolon*, howſoever profeſſedly he had engaged himſelfe to treaſon, might deceive his opinion, or faile his expectation: His pretended diſcontent towards his father might (for ought he knew) be onely perſonated, to make triall of their allegeance, or his reſolution inconſtant to forfeite them to danger. *Abſolon*, though a Traitor, was yet a ſonne. *David*, though provoked, was yet a Father.

No *Gordian* knot was ever ſo cunningly knit by policy, which nature cannot cut, or time diſſolve. The priviledge of youth, or prerogative of a Son may make this action ſeem rather a ſcape than a ſinne: His faults, how great ſoever, will ſeeme rather *Achitophels* than his owne: and

and that which Iuſtice in others wil tearme Treaſon, indulgence in him will interpet Weakneſſe. *David* may remit, and *Abſolon* reconcile, what the one ſuffered, and the other acted; and then muſt *Achitophel* and his aſſociates either ſtand at ſtake to maintaine their Maſters action, or hazard their lives on the brittle confidence of the Kings mercy.

The breach of a ſonnes diſloyalty may perchance be pieced up with filiall ſubmiſſion; but *Achitophels* revolt ſeemes to expect no iſſue but death or victory. The middle way in policy is alwayes rejected as dangerous, and the extreame requires the moſt deſperate, and extreame attempts. *Achitophel* is not here wanting to himſelfe: *Abſolon* muſt yet be engaged to a more notorious action, uncapable of forgiveneſſe, wherein all *Iſrael* may

read his abſolute revolt, and his Fathers greateſt indignation; *Abſalon* muſt be knowne neither to regard, or hope for his fathers reconcilement : *Davids* anger muſt be thought inexorable, and that which Juſtice requires, and the honour of a King commands. If *Abſolon* hope to wed the Throne of *Iſrael*, hee muſt firſt violate his fathers bed : and to this his notorious act of treaſon, let him further adde the ſinne of inceſt. Petty crimes are the effects of inferiour offendors; *Abſolon* muſt be thought as great as himſelfe: as one, who would play the King aſwell in his ſinnes, as his ambition. Neither can this wikedneſſe be ſafe or ſhamefull enough, if ſecret; Secreſie which in other matters, commonly proves the mother of ſecurity, is here reputed the nurſe of danger, and guilt, which uſually ſhunnes the light,

light, is here desirous of discovery. To sinne closely argues either feare or modesty; neither of which can protect a rebell, or beseeme a King: *Set up a Tent* (quoth Achitophel) *on the houses toppe, that all Israel may witnesse* thy sinne, and thy fathers shame, and make the world at once both blush and wonder. Let thy brother *Ammon* sin in a corner, to decline censure; Sinne thou in publicke, to strike censure speechlesse, and outface the severest frownes of Iustice: Let *Ammon* commit incest with his *Sister*; goe thou in unto thy Fathers *Concubines*: what was the weaknesse of lust in him, ought to bee the strength of thy aspiring greatnesse. Thy greatest safety consists in thy greatest villany: and the least blush seemes to betray thy cause to diffidence and danger. Let *Ruben* trespasse with one of his Fathers wives;

goe thou unto tenne of thy Fathers Concubines : that this thy fact at once may ſurmount both example and imitation. Then the *hands of all that are with thee ſhall be ſtrong*: They ſhall ſpeede no worſe than *Abſolon*, and therefore ought to feare no more. To fall with our Captaine ſeemes the leaſt duty: To riſe with him the greateſt honour; and who but a coward, would feare to hazard the life of a Subject to make a King ? Great dangers and great honours beginne and end in the ſame circle : neither is the path ſtrowed with Violets and Roſes, but death and ſlaughter which leades the tents of Victory. This was *Achitophels* firſt Counſaile, as dangerous to decline, as deſperate to execute : but deſperate and extreame purpoſes are engaged to the like meanes, and ſincere honeſty in the courſe of policy, where

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ſhe findes not her ſelfe admitted as the chiefe Miſtres, will ſeldome prove a truſty ſervant.

7. Out of this counſaile of *Achitophel*, not only plotted by himſelfe, but acted by *Abſolon*, will ariſe two eſpeciall obſervations: The firſt is the fulfilling of Gods judgement, and *Nathans* prophecy, threatned before to *David* for his ſinning with *Bathſheba*, and *Uriahs* murther: *Behold* (*ſaith God*; through the mouth of *Nathan*) *I will raiſe up evill againſt thee out of thine owne houſe, and will take thy Wives before thine eyes, and will give them unto thy neighbour, and he ſhall lye with thy Wives in the ſight of the Sonne: for thou diddeſt it ſecretly, but I will doe this thing before all Iſrael, and before the Sunne.* Such is the wiſedome of Almighty GOD, which can worke his owne good out of our wicked-

wickednesse, and make our unjustest actions the instrumentall examples of his owne justice: Our very sinnes, though false traitors to the owners, prove trusty executioners of Gods judgements: and an easie matter it is for that wise disposer of all wordly actions, to turne mans greatest shame into his greatest glory. Secondly, we may observe it as a *maxime* in *worldly policy*: *That a sin can seldome secure it selfe*, but *by addition of greater*: where the house is *swept* & *garnished*, and one *Divell* is too little to enter, *seven Divels* greater than himselfe, are prest to give a fresh assault: For there is no way left for sinne to propagate its power, but sinne: Nor can truth ever be entreated to adventure her selfe as a pledge for false-hood, or stake her credit for a professed enemy. Religious providence, and worldly policy may

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(I confeſſe) ſometimes runne together, but ſeldome ſhake hands. The path of the one as a ſtrait line wee finde alway as one, and like it ſelfe; of the other, crooked, and various, and engaged to many difficulties; If ever they chance to meete, it is but as in a point, and ſo ſoone part. the further thea wee runne in this maze of worldly policy, the further we eſtrange our ſelves from piety; and the diſtance, which at firſt ſeemed below the Senſe, will at length be found above the underſtanding. Every ponderous ſubſtance (as *Naturaliſts* obſerve) the more it deſcends, the faſter the motion: No moment of ſpace, or time wherein wee traverſe the way of wickedneſſe, which addes not ſome weight to the maſſie burthen of our originall impiety, and haſtens not our paſſage to perdition. One ſinne ſeekes to ſecure it

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ſelfe by many, and ſmaller crimes finde no ſafe protection but in the ſhelter of the greater. *Treaſon* and *uſurpation* cannot ſupport themſelves, but by the ſword of *Tyranny*: *Malice* invokes revenge to helpe her, aſſiſted with her ſervants *Murther* and *Detraction*. *Ingratitude* will ſoone breake into open *defiance*, and neglect of Gods precepts is commonly ſeconded with contempt; at leaſt, when all others withdraw their forces, *Impudence* and *Hypocriſie* are ſworne to backe their quarrell: whereof the former can out-face the ſevereſt cenſure, the latter blinde the eyes of the ſtricteſt inquiſition.

Who cannot here obſerve a great diſtance betweene Chriſtian and worldly policy? The one counſells us to make up the breach of our ſins by a ſincere repentance; the other to enlarge it with greater villany.

Binde not two ſinnes together, for in one thou ſhalt not eſcape unpuniſhed, ſaith the wiſeſt of Kings. But theſe Polititians holding themſelves wiſer than the wiſeſt, hold repentance baſe, and perſeverance in ſinne generous. Nobler they ſuppoſe it to adventure forward with danger, than retire backe with ſhame: as though they meant to ſhew themſelves induſtriouſly reſolute to ſell their part in Heaven, and purchaſe their owne damnation. But theſe we muſt leave a while to their own reſolutions, perhaps we ſhall finde them againe, with *Achitophel* hanging on the gallows: whoſe ſecond and laſt counſell offers it ſelfe in the next place to our examination.

8 Hitherto hath *Achitophels* care beene to ſtrengthen the *faction*; both to ſecure himſelfe, and unite the hearts of *Iſrael* more firmely to *Abſolon* their Leader. His ſecond

direction

Direction concernes the ſpeeding of the *execution: Let me now chooſe out* (quoth *Achitophel*) *twelve thouſand men, and I will ariſe, and purſue after* David *this night, and I will come upon him while hee is weary, and weak-handed, and make him affraid, and all the people, which are with him ſhall fly, and I will ſmite the king onely, and I will bring back all the people unto thee; The man whom thou ſeekeſt, is as if all returned: So all the people ſhall be in peace.* In which politick advice of *Achitophels*, three remarkeable circumſtances offer themſelves to our obſervation: which by reaſon of the ſcantling of time, and your wronged patience, I ſhall be conſtrained rather to touch than handle. In the firſt place, his deſire was to have as well, as his Head in the conſpiracy, ſo his Hand in the execution; perhaps becauſe hee hated *David*, he

he was ambitious to ſhew himſelfe the executioner of his owne revenge, and *Davids* ruine: perhaps out of *vaine-glory*, that hee might ſeeme as able to act, as wiſe to project a miſchiefe; perhaps out of an offici us flattery to engage *Abſolons* thankfulneſſe by a double ſervice: But that which ſeemes to me moſt probable, was his extreame jealouſie, not daring to truſt ſo yong an experience with a matter of ſo great moment. *Abſolons* youth ſeemed perchance too ſhallow to entertaine the depth of his directions: his blood too neare to out-face the frownes of a Fathers anger; or the awe of filiall duty could not be ſuppoſed a fit actor in *Davids* Tragedy. The hardeſt Iron at the firſt touch of the *Loadſtone* is reſtored to its firſt temper, and conceives a *Magneticke* inclination. And why might not *Davids* fiery

aſſault, or gracious countenance in his rebellious ſonne *Abſolon* enforce nature to returne unto her ſelfe, and kindle in him the ſparks of filiall duty and obedience? Here may a man read the ſtate and condition of wicked policy, expoſed to a thouſand dangers, and ſubject to a thouſand jealouſies: Well may ſuch men, as *Damocles* at *Dioniſius* Table feed their hopes with the dainties? yet Gods fearefull judgments, as a ſword pendulous over their heads, is alwayes ready to threaten a deſtruction. 'Tis not then a good, but an evill conſcience which makes men cowards: Onely he who wants guilt, wants feare; and nothing but a cleare conſcience can challenge true mother-hood in a couragious reſolution.

The ſecond point we obſerve in *Achitophels* counſell, was a ſtratagem of *Diverſion*: His quarrel was not

no against the people, but *David*: his purpoſe to preſerve the Kingdome, but deſtroy the King; and therefore thought it not ſo meete to hew out his paſſage to *Davids* overthrow through the blood of the ſubjects, as by the Kings forfeyt to purchaſe them to *Abſolons* obedience. His firſt care was to ſtrike at the roote it ſelfe, well knowing the branches would fall of their owne accord; and the peoples allegiance once dead in *David*, would ſoone quicken againe in *Abſolon*.

The ſtrength of *Iſrael* is ſhut up in the Princes Palace, and the ſame power which conquers the one, is ſoone maſter of the other. This counſell ſeemes to partake as well of good as bad: with the death of one to redeeme the life of many, in the rigorous Lawes of hoſtility ſeemes not a duty, but a great courteſie,

teſie: But to ſell a King to buy a Kingdome, and ſtake one Prince for many ſubjects, is leſſe than courteſie, and more than cruelty. Neither was this courſe affected by *Achitophel* to ſpare the lives of innocents; or avoyd a greater miſchiefe; but that he found it an eaſier way to conquer *David*, and reduce the people under the yoake of *Abſolons* juriſdiction.

The good, which politicians uſe to pretend, commonly ſwells in ſhew, but ſhrinks in ſubſtance: as the Ocean, they would ſeeme to flow in their kindneſſes, and embrace us with twyning armes, as the waves the Continent; but ſeeking to lay hold on them, we find them commonly to ebbe into nothing, and ſnatch back their owne with ſome advantage: If they chance to be Authors of any good, it ſerves onely to flatter opinion,

and

and deceave ſimplicity : not that they love good, but that they may be the better armed to worke miſchiefe. To commit evill for a good end, ſeemes to beare a better pretence before men, than excuſe before God : But to ſuffer, or act ſome good for an evill end, is the height of mans wickedneſſe, and the Devils inſtitution.

The third, and laſt circumſtance in this *Achitophels* counſell, was by a ſuddaine and unexpected aſſault to take the beſt advantage of his owne ſtrength, and *Davids* weakneſſe. *I will* (ſaith he) *ſuddenly fall on* David *while he is weary and weake-handed, and the people ſhall fly.* To joyne with mens misfortunes, and adde to miſery, ſhews rather baſeneſſe of the man, than confidence of the cauſe ; and to ſecond Gods afflictions with our owne revenge, is a marke of Gods inſtru-

inſtrument, but the Devils ſervant.

The apprehenſion of an apt opportunity is of it ſelfe (I confeſſe) a matter indifferent as well to good as wicked policy: Yet haſty and unexpected actions commonly carry with them a greater ſuſpicion of guilt, than diſcretion; as that, which ſeekes to prevent a tryall, and feares diſcovery. Time, the father of truth, would (queſtionleſſe) have betrayed *Abſolons* cauſe to common examination, and reduced the diſcontented *Commons* to their firſt temper. *David* might have given ſatisfaction, and allegeance have revived in his ſubjects hearts. Neceſſity, which perhaps begat the effects of ill government, might have urged the cauſes and reaſon, which at the firſt ſeemed to fawne on their diſcontent, might afterwards be taught to correct her errours, and ſuppreſſe their inſolence. All this

Achito-

Achitophel knew right well, and therefore choſe rather to take advantage of the peoples ſuddaine paſſion than their maturer judgment, as one, who had good cauſe to ſhun a legall Iury, where hee could promiſe himſelfe no other than loſſe in the fatall verdict.

Hitherto (beloved) have we traced the foot-ſteps of our grand traytor *Achitophel* through all his politick counſells, and unnaturall rebellions: Your expectation I know (though almoſt tyred) hath long ere this run to the place of execution, and proclaimed his comming: But your wronged patience, and my want of time hath enforced me to reprive him till another Seſſion. *To God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed al glory, power, and praiſe, now and for evermore,* Amen.

Achitophel,

OR,

The wicked Polititian.

2 SAMUEL Chap. 17. Ver. 23.

And when Achitophel *saw that his counsell was not followed, he saddled his asse, and arose, and gate home, and set his house in order, and hanged himselfe, and was buried in the sepulcher of his Fathers.*

The second part.

COMMON censure hath stampt it for a currant Proverb, *That it is better for a man to be fortunate than wise.* For world-

worldly wiſedom, though ſhe ſeem alwayes to fawne on fortune, yet can never command, and ſeldome entreate her ſervice. It hath beene thought the pride and priviledge of that power which we call *Fortune*, to beſtow her beſt favours where ſhe findes leaſt worth; to crowne folly, and croſſe wiſedome; to make fooles happy, and the wiſe unfortunate: As a Queen, ſhe is ſuppoſed to ſhew her greateſt Majeſty in mans weakneſſe; to pitty ſloth, and envy induſtry; as moſt jealous, leaſt mans wit or endeavours ſhould challenge any part in her prerogative. But he that knowes wiſely how to arbitrate betwixt the clouds of Pagan ignorance, and the cleare Sunne-ſhine of Chriſtianity, betwixt *Poeticke* fancies, and *Propheticke* Viſions, ſhall finde vulgar opinion only miſtaken in the name, aſcribing that

tranſcendent power of diſpoſing worldly actions to a *Deity* which they called *Fortune*, which Chriſtian knowledge might have taught them more properly to have termed *Providence*. And howſoever they have bounded her large Empire beyond their owne reaſon; yet Chriſtianity hath travelled much farther, & yet can preſcribe no limits; as that which tranſcends into an infinite, and outreacheth the eye of all diſcovery. And though no place hath been found ſo baſe in the Theater of Nature or Civill actions, wherein *Providence* cannot ſhew the abundant Trophy's of her magnificence: yet there deſires ſhee to triumph moſt, where to men ſhee ſeemes to have leaſt power. Her chiefe glory is to ſet up her enſignes on the gates of mans pride, and tread on the neck of worldly policy. No marvaile then that in the great

great politician *Achitophel*, in whom neither loyalty could command reſtraint, or perſwade duty; whom neither undoubted valour could checke, or danger terrifie; onely *Providence* could challenge the juriſdiction. His politicke obſervation of *Abſolons* diſpoſition & rare endowments deſigning him out as a fit ſubject for his treaſon, ſeconded by his crafty and irreligious counſaile of abuſing *Davids* Concubines, (through which in my former Sermon in this place I uſhered forth your attention) had hitherto paſſed current, and found in event as much as it promiſed in expectation. *Abſolon* had hitherto expreſſed himſelfe no worſe a learner than he a teacher; that the World may well doubt, whether the one were more happy to project, or the other to put in practice. Nothing now ſeemes remaining

behind, but to ſtrike the leaſt ſtroak, and give the fatall onſet. *Davids* overthrow and *Abſolons* advancement together appeare in ſight, and his long and tedious ambition as it were within a league arrived at the port of victory. Let not *Abſolon* play the truant in his laſt leſſon, and within a few houres the voyce of *Iſrael* ſhall ſalute him King. But the change of a good Maſter oftentimes makes a non proficient Scholler: *Achitophels* precepts muſt be corrected by *Chuſay*, his ſecond Tutor. Two eyes are preſumed to diſcerne more than one; and the rugged and uneven knots in our firſt invention, ought to be filed by the ſecond. Though *Achitophel* in counſaile be a politician, yet *Abſolon* in ambition is a King, and therefore ought to arrogate to himſelfe aſwell the honour of the cõqueſt, as of the Scepters. Too much

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it might ſeeme for *Achitophel* to have both; too little for *Abſolon* to have no hand at all in this Kingly project. *If Abſolon* dare not truſt his owne advice, yet let him ſhew his liberty of conſent. Wiſedome conſiſts as much in choyce as in invention; neither ſeemes it the leaſt of *Abſolons* prerogative, amidſt divers counſellours to declare himſelfe a King: *Achitophel* ſhall be ſuffered to ſpeake his mind as an aſſiſtant, not to determine cauſes as a Iudge; and therefore muſt pardon *Abſolon*, if approving him in all the reſt, he in this one diſſent. But oftentimes he that can beſt act, can worſt penne his owne part: And therefore no marvaile if *Abſolon* uſurping the office of *Achitophel*, began to faile in his laſt act. But to leave *Abſolon* to his head-ſtrong will, we muſt here ſearch more nearely

into the neglect of *Achitophels* counſiile ; which being the ſecond part in the former ſubdiviſion of my Text, offers it ſelfe as a ſubject for this dayes exerciſe: *And when Achitophel ſaw that his counſell was not followed, &c.*

2. *Achitophels* counſell thus defeated (as you have heard) offers it ſelfe to our enquiry under the obſervation of their cauſes and their concomitant circumſtances. The cauſes preceding the fact wee may obſerve to be twofold ; either *Primary*, or *Secondary*. The Primary we finde to be no other than Almighty God, from whom all other inferiour agents derive their ſtrength and action. Where Nature beginnes and Reaſon ends, there muſt we place that omnipotent and eternall power, as the Center from which all operations firſt ſpring, and the bound-

leſſe

leſſe circumference into which all Diſcourſes runne. Betwixt this *Eternall* and *Inferiour* Agents, as the diſtance knowes no proportion, ſo reaſon could never finde reſiſtance or oppoſition : and eaſie was it for that omnipotent Providence, to whom *Achitophels* counſailes were from all eternity diſcovered, to decree as well the meanes, as the end of his defeate. For as in the vaſte frame of Nature, bódies compared one with the other ſeeme *Heterogeneal*, conſiſting of divers and oppoſite operations : Yet as ſo many Wheeles in an artificiall Engine, are by the ſame hand directed to the ſame common uſe ; ſo the actions and counſels of men, howſoever caſually they ſeeme to meet, and juſtle one the other, are notwithſtanding preordained by the ſame *infinite* counſaile to cooperate

to the ſame univerſall end. Whence will naturally ariſe this obſervation; *That howſoever men may propoſe to themſelves, it is onely in the power of Almighty God to diſpoſe.* A propoſition better knowne as a Proverbe among men, than acknowledged in their practice. Had yet the great Politician of this world as much *Logicke* to judge, as cunning to contrive their owne plots, they would, queſtionleſſe, out of their combination of ſecond cauſes, without reſpect unto the firſt, rather ſuſpect a fallacy, than promiſe a demonſtration. Had they as much acquaintance with Gods Word, as their owne wicked and prophane Axiomes; they would have heard the Lord often threatning in holy Scriptures to ſtagger the counſell of the wicked, & turne the wiſedome of the wiſeſt into folly. Had they rather deſired to be inſtructed, than flatte-

flattered, by experience, they would have found of their profeſſion, in ſtead of a few crowned happy by event, tenne thouſand miſcarry in the meanes. A good ſucceſſe, like a ſlye Paraſite, rather ſoothes than commends our action, and like a coy Miſtreſſe proſtitutes her ſelfe to mens neglect, but frownes on their ambition. But theſe are popular arguments, ſubject almoſt to common ſenſe, wherein every common obſervation may claime a ſhare. Should we ſearch with more ſubtilty, either as ſound *Divines*, or deepe *Philoſophers*, into the myſterious manner of Gods working; wee ſhall finde no ſmall argument to be drawne from the diſparity betwixt *Divine Providence*, and *Worldly policy*. The plots and counterplots of men are uſually grounded, either upon open *Reſiſtance*, or ſlye *Diverſion*,

The one is taught us in the booke of *Nature* : wherein we may read the interchangeable conqueſt of the elements in their mutuall conflicts & operations; the other is grounded on *Civill* obſervation as well as nature, which in the ſhorteſt and eaſieſt way commonly findes the ſafeſt victory. But Gods Almighty hand, which never knew *Reſiſtance*, or needs *Diverſion*, eaſily knowes how to worke his owne ends by his ſupernatural concurrēce with worldly agents in their moſt affected projects. The ſame meanes which wicked men propoſe to thēſelves, as the ſafeſt agents for their deſired ends, he makes the inſtruments of their owne ruine; that the moſt exacteſt plot, wherein policy could ever hug her owne invention, may ſeeme the moſt exquiſite example of her owne ſhame. Eaſie was it for that great King of heaven and earth

with

with thunder and lightning from heaven to have paſhed *Abſolon* in pieces, and ſcorched up his ſeditious army; more eaſily could hee have broken the ſubtile nets of *Achitophels* politicke invention, than *Sampſon* the *Philiſtines* bands, or an *Elephant* a *Spiders* webbe: but intending rather to make them their owne executioners, he ſuffers them to runne in their owne Labyrinth, till they meete their owne ruine. What way in Nature could *Pharaoh* deviſe more exquiſite to increaſe the ſtrength of *Iſrael*, and make them populous, than to tye them to their daily burthens? Whence could *Moſes* have better derived his greatnes in *Pharaoh's* Court, than from the bulruſh cradle floating on the teares of the weeping river? how could *Pharaoh* have feared, or expected ever in his

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owne tyrannous decree, projected for his owne ſafeguard, and *Iſraels* extirpation, to have found *Iſrael* ranſomed, and himſelfe ruined? That his owne daughter ſhould preſerve that as a cabinet of pleaſure, which *Moſes* mother beſtowed on him as a mournfull coffin? Little thought *Ioſephs* brethren in ſelling him to the *Egyptians*, to have purchaſed their own ſhame and his future greatneſſe: Little thought thoſe *Romane* Emperours, in their raging Perſecutions to have ſowne the ſeede of the Church in the blood of the *Martyrs*, and have ſeene Chriſtianity moſt triumphant in her greateſt wounds. Little thought Pope *Leo* the tenth, in ſending his *Indulgences* into *Germany*, to have met with ſuch an opportunity as the peoples diſcontent, and the *Heremite Friers* defeat to have ſtirred up the hot ſpirit

of

of *Luther*, to have given ſuch a fatall blow to his owne greatneſſe, & ſet his tyrannous Hierarchy in ſuch a terrible combuſtion. Such is the infinite wiſedome of that *Providence* to ordaine worldly policy to afford not onely the apteſt inſtruments, but the exacteſt opportunities to deſtroy it ſelfe, and there to declare our greateſt weakneſſe, where wee repoſe our greateſt ſtrength. Where by way of application wee may draw two other conſectaries, expreſſing no leſſe apparent footſteps of Gods Almighty providence, in diſpoſing the affaires of men: Firſt, *that in prevention of worldly plots and ſtratagems he commonly ſhews not himſelfe but at the laſt puſh, and ſeldome diſcovers our danger, till wee ſuppoſe our ſelves moſt ſecure.* Had GODS Wiſedome ran the courſe of humane policy, hee might have prevented

ted as well as defeated *Achitophels* deſigne; hee might have ſtirred up *Davids* jealouſie betime to have ſhut up *Abſolon* in priſon; or according to the prepoſterous rules of the *Ottonian Juſtice*, have rewarded his future treaſon with a preſent execution: *Abſolon* might have failed as well in the firſt as laſt precept; or at leaſt *Achitophel* might have read in *Abſolons* diſpoſition his wilfull weakneſſe or inconſtancy. But God purſues not ours, but his owne glory, as one who is then moſt willing to ſhew his power, when our hopes or abilities can challenge leaſt.

8. Our ſecond Conſectary drawn from Gods omnipotent providence, is, *That God ſits not as an idle Spectator, but interpoſeth himſelfe as a chiefe Actor on the theater of worldly actions.* It was not onely an idle but a wicked dreame of *Epicurus* and his

his followers, that God, buſied in the contemplation of heavenly matters, gave over the government of the world to *Chance* or *Nature*: as if he ſuppoſed it a *Mill*, or *Waterworke*, which once framed by an Artificer, and animated by an active power, ſhould worke of its one accord, and preſerve in it the principles both of *Motion* and *Continuance*: Which opinion (for ought that I know) might be faſtned on our Maſter *Ariſtotle*, who not onely in his *Phyſicks* ſeemes to deny a *Providence*; but in the whole courſe of his Philoſophy ſeemes to preferre *Nature*, as a *Deity* whom God ſhould rather ſerve than command: yet here, ſhould I freely diſcover mine opinion, I ſhould think our Philoſopher miſtaken, in dividing one and the ſelfe ſame thing into divers Names: To ſeparate *God* from *Nature*, is to divorce *Nature* from

from her ſelfe, which ſeemes of it ſelfe abſurd; but to aſcribe act and motion unto the latter, and appoint the former to ſit idle as a ſpectator, or at leaſt a neceſſary Agent to ſerve Nature, is more abſurd to think a finite more excellent than an infinite; which is ſtrange how ſo great a wit ſhould once imagin. But we out of the principles of *Chriſtian Philoſophy* may eaſily be taught a double concourſe of the Creator with the Creature; the one *Generall*, which I hold to be no other than that we uſually call *Nature*; the other *Speciall*, which humane *Ignorance* or *Admiration* hath tearmed *Miracle*: Neither can reaſon imagine the naturall generation of things to be any other than a *continuate creation*, wherein Almighty God, according to the *aptneſſe* and *preparation* of the ſubject, dayly miniſters new formes, or

conſerves

conſerves the ſame: which the *Divines* tearme *Preſervation*: For to give a creature, without Gods immediate concurrence, an ability of producing the like or equall ſubſtance to it ſelfe, or by his owne power to derive out of that firſt *Chaos* a new Forme or Nature, ſeemes to me to trench too farre on Gods *Prerogative*; I had almoſt ſaid, to emulate God in the ſecond part of his Creation. But to leave this Common-wealth of *Nature* to its firſt inſtitution, and enter into the view of mens actions, we ſhal finde a more ſpeciall concurrence of Divine providence thau in the former. To what other cauſe elſe ſhould we owe that miraculous preſervation of Gods *Church*, which through the violence of ſo many ages hath ſaved it ſelfe entire, with ſo ſmall a number, and great an Oppoſition? Time, which

hath

hath ſeene the riſe and fall of ſo many famous kingdomes; the invention and decay of ſo many learned labours; the erection and defacing of ſo many ſtately Trophies; Time, which in his vaſte gulfe hath not onely ſwallowed up antiquity, but for the greateſt part envyed her hiſtory: hath yet cheriſhed in her boſome this one darling, and kept a ſure Regiſter of all her actions. Should I deſcend to particular examples of Gods concurrence in mans actions, I ſhould ſooner loſe my ſelfe than finde an end. The moſt irreligious *Heathen*, through the thick clouds of ignorance have often eſpyed the glimpſe of Gods dreadfull lightning, and often quaked at his thunder; They have felt his finger in their wounds, and acknowledged his ſtrength in their weakneſſe: Yea, ſuch hath beene the power of Almighty God to expoſe

poſe their owne wicked actions as a Table of their confeſſion, and extort an acknowledgment of his victory out of their blaſphemy. *Julian* that wicked Apoſtate, though as politick to obſcure, as malicious to oppoſe the truth of *Chriſt Ieſus*; was yet in the end conſtrained to ſhut up his tyranny with a *Vicisti Galilae*. In like ſort wee read of *Mahomet* the ſecond, the firſt Emperour of the *Turkes*, that at the ſiege of *Scodra* againſt the *Chriſtians*, in the defence of ſo ſmall a Citty againſt his mighty Army, finding God his enemy, hee blaſphemouſly asked by way of exprobration, whether God had not enough to doe in Heaven, that he ſhould enterpoſe himſelfe in his affaires on earth? Hee that will not deny a God, muſt of neceſſity grant a providence; and who knows himſelfe, and ſifts into his owne will and

actions,

actions, muſt needs acknowledge a ſupernaturall power which determines them to good or evill. Here, ſtood it with my time or your patience, could I proceed to taxe *Pelagius*, and his latter ſpawne the *Ieſuites* and *Arminians*: who imagining our will to be her owne Miſtreſſe, have admitted God no otherwiſe than as a ſervant or aſſiſtant; as though that Almighty power were not authorized to preordaine, but onely bound to ſecond our converſion. Their ſalvation they would rather owe unto themſelves than grace, as though they ſought the firſt cauſe in their owne inclination, and expected nothing of God but a *Morall* and ſtrong perſwaſion. But although in deed they will deny a certaine and ſpeciall *Predeſtination*, yet in words they will grant a *Preſcience*. Here would I willingly aske a queſtion out of my

my Text: Whether God abſolutely foreſaw *Abſolons* inclination of rejecting *Achitophels* counſell or not; If they grant the *Negative*, they deny a *Preſcience*; If the *Affirmative*, I demand againe, whether this foreſight could imply a neceſſity of event, or leave *Abſolon* to his owne free choyce? If the former, they muſt deny him a *Free-will* of declining to the other ſide, which they labour by all meanes to eſtabliſh: if the latter, they muſt either acknowledge Gods *preſcience* to be uncertaine, againſt the ground they have already granted; or at leaſt affirme that a certaine knowledge may be of ſuch things as ſhal never come to paſſe. Heere the *Ieſuitos* are better provided to ſhift than anſwer, like the ſubtill *Sepes* to make an eſcape by troubling the Water, and rather than they would bee thought to know

know nothing, they will ſay any thing. Where the *Scripture* ſhews no faire countenance, and *Reaſon* faints, their recourſe to Schoole-ſubtilties muſt be their onely refuge: But were there no Smith in *Iſrael*, yet might theſe *Philiſtines* be entreated to ſharpen our ſword for our defence againſt their battery. God (ſay they) from all eternity fore-ſaw the inclination of mans free-will, upon which he grounded his decree of with-holding or conferring farther grace. Heere I muſt aske againe, whether God fore-ſaw it in his owne Decree, or the diſpoſition of the ſecond cauſes? If they aſſent unto the former, then muſt this fore-ſight in the order of our underſtanding, not prevent, but rather ſecond the decree, which they deny. If they ſtick to the latter, (as indeed they doe) I demand how ſecond cauſes may be ſuppoſed

to

to worke, except they were predetermined and actuated by the firſt? That ſecond cauſes worke not in their owne, but their owners ſtrength, is their owne principle; and to grant them an operation not depending on the firſt Agent, were to ſet an inſtrument to worke without an hand. I would aske moreover, whether God fore-ſeeing *Achitophels* counſell, and *Abſolons* inclination, had the power to hinder it or not? If ſo, then was it in his power to foreſee what himſelfe could hinder; which checks the certainty of Gods knowledge, and involves an apparant *Contradiction*: If not, how can we imagine him *Omnipotent*, which cannot challenge ſo much power over ſecond cauſes, as to turne and divert them to his owne uſes? This argument *Vorſtius* and *Epiſcopius* found ſo ſtrong againſt them, that to backe

their

their abſurdity they muſt adde apparant blaſphemy; allowing God either no *Preſcience* at all, or ſuch as is onely uncertaine, and conjecturall; which impious and groſſe opinion I hold ſufficiently confuted in the mention. But I have ſtayed here too long, and have farre to go: wherefore having taken a generall ſurvey of the primary of chiefe cauſe of *Achitophels* defeate, let us deſcend to the ſecond cauſes which in the next place offer themſelves to obſervation.

4. Gods power hath expreſſed it ſelfe legible as well in the Booke of *Nature* as of *Grace*: and naturall Agents (as you have heard) as they derive their operations from his ſtrength, ſo they are determined by his will, and directed to his glory. Here we finde *Nature* in ſecond Agents not ſet againſt herſelfe, though raiſed a pitch beyond her

her private inclination; and the firſt cauſe without either need or violence, to entertaine the ſervice of the ſecond. Whence, ere we deſcend to each particular inferiour agent, will riſe one generall obſervation; *That Almighty God bringeth to paſſe miraculous & great events, commonly admits the cooperation of ſecond cauſes.* As eaſie was it, queſtionleſſe, for that great Architect of Nature, who out of waſte and emptineſſe begat a world, to create as to command, to cauſe as to entertaine the operation of inferiour Agents. Here might Hiſtory ſhew herſelfe prodigall of examples, but never bankrupt: every moment in the ordinary courſe of humane actions begets ſome inſtance or other to demonſtrate Gods gracious love and favour of the world; who able to daſh both Policy and nature out of counte-

nance is notwithſtanding pleaſed to admit them as his obedient hand-maids. But to expreſſe the ſecret cooperation of Gods working by ſecond cauſes, is a matter which hath heretofore ſtaggered Philoſophers, and puzled the apprehenſion of the ſharpeſt and acuteſt Divines. Nevertheleſſe, ſo farre forth as the infinite power of God may diſpence with mans enquiry, wee may reduce the manner of his working to certaine heads, to decline, as much as we can the two enemies of underſtanding, obſcurity, and confuſion. The action then of Gods concurring with ſecond cauſes concernes either the *beginning*, *progreſſe*, or *end* of the ſame act. In the beginning we may call it either *Poſitive*, or *Negative*. The *Poſitive* conſiſts either in the furtherance or hindrance of humane actions; both which may be either *inter-*

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nall, or *externall*. The internall promotion or hindrance is againe divided into two acts; for either it concernes the ſupportance of the Creature, which in the firſt moment is tearmed *Creation*, in continuance, *Preſervation*; or the preordination of the Agent, which with our *Divines*, againſt the tenent of *Arminius*, I dare to call *Predetermination*. The *externall* is the preſentment of ſome externall and preſent *obiect* to the apprehenſion of the *ſence*, *will*, or *underſtanding*; which latter acts concurre as well in Gods *hindrance* of humane actions: For the ſame Almighty power can at once both promote his owne, and hinder mens counſels. This hindrance is many waies brought to paſſe; for either the impediment is caſt on our *authority*, *power*, *will* or *ſtate*. Our authority of free-working is curbed and reſtrai-

ned by the *Law*, whereof the breach is a ſin: as that of *Adam* in Paradiſe, whoſe liberty could not diſpenſe with the taſting of the forbidden Tree. Our *Naturall power* is checkt by many intervenient cauſes: firſt, by cutting off the agent from life and being, as that of the ſiege of *Ieruſalem* by *Sennacherib*, by ſmiting in one night an hundred foureſcore and five thouſand; or the bringing of *Elias* the Prophet to *Ahaziah* by the conſumption of fifty men by fire from heaven. Secondly, by detraction or diminution of the power, as *Ieroboam* was reſtrained from apprehending the Prophet, by the drying up of his hand. Thirdly, by oppoſition of equall or greater ſtrength, as *Vzziah* was hindred by *Azaria* and his foureſcore Prieſts from offering in the Temple. Fourthly, by removing or ſubtraction of the *Obiect*, as

our

our Saviour ſaved himſelfe from the violence of the *Iewes*, and *Tribune Paul* from the conſpiracy. An impediment may be caſt on our will either by Gods *Predetermining power*, which againſt *Arminius* wee have formerly maintained, or by ſome outward *perſwaſive argument*. The arguments wherewith he uſually diſſwades our will from commencing any action, are commonly drawne either from the *Topicks* of ſeeming *impoſſibility* and apparant *difficulty*, or *unpleaſantneſſe*, *loſſe*, and *diſhonour*. By the firſt for a while the *Scribes* and *Phariſes* were reſtrained from offering violence unto our Saviour, becauſe they knew him of the people to bee eſteemed as a Prophet. In like ſort God heretofore ſet a barre betwixt his owne people and the Idolatrous *Iſraelites*, leaſt they ſhould trafficke aſwel ſinnes as familiarity.

By the ſecond *Ioſephs* brethren were diverted from the murther of their brother, becauſe a milder courſe ſeemed to ſerve their purpoſe. By the third and laſt, *Ioſeph* was diſſwaded from adultry with *Potiphers* Wife, and *David* from touching the *Lords annoynted*. An obſtacle may be caſt on the *act* it ſelfe two manner of wayes; either by taking away the *object*, which with ſome we have reduced to the impediment of the *power*: or by diſabling the *influxe* and power of the *agent* in regard of the *patient*: whereof we have an example in the *three Children*, unconſumed in the fiery Furnace. The *negative* act of Gods concurring in permiſſion is cleane oppoſite to the other, and therefore ought to be ſquared by the ſame diſtinction: for as *Logicians* have taught us, *Oppoſites* ought to ſuffer the ſame diviſion. Onely from hence

hence we muſt except the *impediment* caſt on our actions by the *Law* or *authority*; for otherwiſe would there follow an apparant contradiction, that the ſame *act* ſhould be a ſinne, and yet no ſinne: a ſin as it is by the *Law* forbidden, & yet no ſinne as it is by the ſame power permitted. Theſe acts fore-ſpoken of Gods concurrence, ſeeme to prevent and precede the action of an inferiour agent. In the action it ſelfe we find two ſpeciall acts; the one, an *actuall determination* of the *agent* to the *obiect*, the other a *direction* to the *end*. An inſtance of the former we have in *Herods* cruelty upon the children, which was diverted by our Saviour by the ſubſtitution of another object. Of this latter in King *Ahaſueroſh*, who aim'd the ſpoyles of ſo many Virgin Concubines lighted on *Heſter*, whom Providence had marked out

to be the preſerver of the *Iewiſh* nation. The concourſe of God after & in the end of humane actions is no other than the direction of the event to a further purpoſe: which we obſerve in the *Iewes* cruelty in crucifying our Saviour; the execution of whoſe malice was found to be the moſt exquiſite meanes of our ſalvation. But I have almoſt loſt my ſelfe in this Labyrinth, whereinto, though *Philoſophy* ſeemes to have taught an entrance in, yet *Divinity* never diſcovered a paſſage out, as that which beginnes with mans ſmalleſt knowledge and in his greateſt ignorance. Hence are we taught not ſo farre to truſt to Gods providence, as to neglect the ordinary meanes which God offers to our induſtry or obſervation. *Hezekiah*, though he had already received under Gods owne hand and ſeale, a leaſe of fifteen yeares

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to the date of life almoſt expired, neglected neither the *Prophets* counſell, nor the helpe of his *Phyſitians* : and *David* in this place, a man after Gods owne heart, and confident enough of his protection, hath notwithſtanding his preſent recourſe to ſecond cauſes ; as preordained of God for *Achitophels* defeate, and his delivery. Which ſecond cauſes comming next in order particularly to be traced out, your favourable attention will, I hope, a while longer hold the candle, while I briefly read them.

5. The *inferiour agents* concurring to the neglect of *Achitophels* counſell, are reduced unto two heads ; The *impulſive* and *inſtrumentall*. The impulſive cauſe which moved God to defeate *Achitophels* counſell, (ſo farre as according to the language of men wee may ſpeake of God) was *Davids prayer*,

whereby he beſought him to confound the counſell of *Achitophel* his profeſt enemy. The good uſe of praier amongſt devout and religious men, hath alwayes beene eſteemed both the firſt and laſt remedy in our greateſt dangers, as the ſureſt key which opens and ſhuts the doore of Gods ſecret cloſet. When our friends ſhrinke from us, and all worldly ſtratagems are out of ſight; when dangers preſent their *Gorgon* faces as hideous as our feares, and death ſtands at our elbowes to ſummon our appearance to the laſt arraignement; onely prayer is left to intercede as a gracious Oratour and effective advocate. Though *Achitophel* in wit and induſtry would ſhew himſelfe a Politician, yet *David* in ſanctity, muſt expreſſe himſelfe a Prophet: and though *Abſalons* hopes are grounded on his worldly ſtrength, yet *Davids*

ſtrength

ſtrength is erected on Gods protection. Neither in his ſacred ejaculation, wherein he addreſſed himſelfe to Gods will and mercy, was his deſire untutored, or his devotion igrant. He knew to whom he ſpake, and obſerved a diſtance: as fearing leaſt his religious zeale might ſeeme unmannerly, if unſeaſonable. The greateſt offices are commonly ſubject to the greateſt ſolœciſmes, and Prayer, Devotions moſt truſty meſſenger, if not well directed or acquainted with her embaſſage, may ſoone degenerate into ſuperſtition. But ſo well inſtructed was *David* in this religious courtſhip, as if the end of his ſuite had beene others inſtitution, and his example our rule. Whether we reſpect the *Author*, *End*, *Object*, *Time*, or *Forme* of his earneſt petition, we ſhall obſerve him as diſcreet as religious, as one which

owed

owed his oraizons asmuch to knowledge as devotion. First, we find his praier neither to be ignorant, nor hypocriticall; but as proceeding from a generous and uncorrupted heart, ushered in by sincerity, & accompanied with contrition. Hee measured his meditations rather by waight than number, he was not taught as a Popish *penitentiary*, to count his beads in stead of his praiers, and make his fingers the intelligencers to his faith. He knew not so much complement as the Divels formal Courtiers, who desire as little to be beleeved of God as understood of men; and esteeme Prayer rather as a decent *formality* than a religious exercise. Secondly, the end of his praier was no other than the preservation of his people, and his owne defence; neither in his owne defēce sought he *revenge* but *iustice*; his prayer was not directed against the

the perſon but the ſinne; neither his deſire (for ought I ſee) ſo much in the ruine of *Achitophel*, as the diverſion of his policy. *Turne* (ſaith he) *the wiſedome of* Achitophel *into folly*; wee finde not in this forme the affected curſes of the *Romiſh Synagogue*, which raving *Shimei* at the time dogging him in his way, might as eaſily have taught as *David* ſuffered. But the *Pope* perhaps may command what *David* never durſt to entreate of God; and what is a King and Prophet to Chriſts univerſall *Vicar*, or *Davids* prerogative to his *Supremacy*? Too much might it be thought for *David* to banne or excommunicate a graceleſſe ſonne, or rebellious ſubject: yet may it perhaps ſeeme too little for *Peters* ſucceſſour, in whoſe hands are the keyes of Heaven, Hel, and Purgatory, to ſhut and open at his pleaſure.

Loth

Loth I am (beloved) to jeſt in earneſt, or turne a ſerious blaſphemy into a pleaſant *Irony*. But nothing mocks us more than our ſhamefull actions; and the ſame power which turnes humane wiſedome into folly, makes it unto men ridiculous. To bewaile folly with *Heraclitus*, argues charity; and yet to laugh at it with *Democritus*, can be interpreted no ſinne, but juſtice. Thirdly, the object to which *Davids* prayer was directed, was no other than God himſelfe, as one beſt acquainted with his neceſſity, and moſt able to relieve him. Had he beene taught the complement of our *Romane* Courtiers, or the religious myſteries of *Popery*, he might have prepared Gods eares before by the mediation of ſome *Saint*, or at leaſt have made proviſion of ſome inchanted *Relique* to preſerve him ſafe from danger. The holy

holy *Legend*, (had he lived in theſe riper times) might queſtionleſſe have inſtructed him in the particular offices of each Saint, as well as the ancient *Romane* records in the prerogative of each inferiour *Deity*. A thouſand to one but ſome humble *St. Francis* would have bin ſingled out to deliver his petition, or ſome charitable *S. Thomas Becket*, who could not deny a part of his aſſiſtance, would have beene moved with the petition of a King. But *David* (it ſeemeth) better knew the King himſelfe than theſe his Courtiers, and neglecting theſe inferiour officers, preſents his ſuite to no other than God himſelfe, whom nevertheleſſe hee found (if wee beleeve Scriptures) facile enough both to heare his prayer, and grant his requeſt. Fourthly, the time and opportunity of his prayer cannot but miniſter ſomewhat to obſer-

obſervation. He deferred not his petition, like a malefactor on the gibbet, or a prophane Sea-man in perplexity, to the laſt extremity; but hee begimmes where deſperate and careleſſe ſinners would at leaſt deſire to end. No ſooner had Fame as a ſwift Purſivant overtaken *Achitophel* in his revolt, but hee makes his recourſe to Almighty God, as one who knew well that it was his office rather to governe than obey Deſtinie. The ſame hand of vengeance which by *Moſes* entreaty was reſtrained from the overthrow of the idolatrous *Iſraelites*, and by a generall prayer and repentance from the deſolation of *Niniveh*, he could not imagine either ſlacke or impotent in the defeate of his enemies, or defence of his faithfull ſervant. Fiftly, wee obſerve his prayer to bee ſhort, and pithy; not tedious, and impertinent; as thinking

thinking it meeter that his heart ſhould dictate to his tongue, than his tongue interpret to his heart. His prayer was not crude and unconcocted, abounding with as many *Tautologies* as words; but ſeaſonable and *Pathetick*, expreſſing no leſſe than his earneſt deſire, and directed no further than the preſent purpoſe.

Heere as our Saviour in the Goſpell heretofore taxed the *Phariſes* of long and tedious babling, might I proceed to reprehend ſome *Phariſes* of our time, were I ſure to bee mine owne Interpreter. But I am much affraid, leſt through the ſides of a few factious and fantaſtick ſpirits, I ſhould be ſuſpected to wound religion. The ſixt and laſt circumſtance in *Davids* prayer was, that it proceeded from him *extemporary*, as beſt ſuting with an extemporary and ſudden accident.

Hence

Hence our moderne *Maſſe-prieſts* might have beene taught a more profitable act of prayer, than the ſale of ſet *Liturgies* for all occaſions. No invention of man could ever prove ſo infinite, as to ſift the preciſe corners of every mans conſcience: neither is it in the wit of man, but God, to dictate a preſent forme for all future accidents, and preſcribe a ſpeciall Antidote againſt all temptations. Heerein commonly the *Phyſitian* ſhews himſelfe no ſooner than the diſeaſe, as one who would have us depend rather on his preſent favour, than our premeditated counſell; and in ſuch caſes I take that of our Saviour, [*Dabitur in illâ horâ*] to be underſtood. Nevertheleſſe from this or other the like *ejaculatory prayers*, warranted by Scripture, and practiſed by holy men, little ground of argument can the *Brownists* take for their opinion;

nion; who admitting no diſtinction betwixt *publicke* and *private* prayer, would have all to proceed fr m an extemporary and ſudden meditation, as though God could not as well direct our ſtudy, as ſtrengthen our delivery; and there were not a place as well for attention to follow, as invention to dictate in our Devotion. For the confutation of which mens unwarrantable induſtry, we needegoe no further than our Saviours owne example, who preſcribed us a ſet forme of prayer, or *David* at leaſt, of whom we now ſpeake: who hath left behind him ſo many ſweet and divine meditations, as a teſtimony of his ſanctity, and a patterne for our imitation.

Hitherto (beloved) have I diſcourſed of the impulſive ſecond cauſe of *Achitophels* defeate: The inſtrumentall cauſes, whereunto my method

method in the next place is engaged, concerne either the immediate *prevention* of *Achitophels* deſigne, or *diſcovery* of it to *David* and his Army. The former conſiſting of *Chuſay's* loyalty, and *Abſolons* weakneſſe, diſcovers unto us as well the character of a truſty ſubject, preferring his Kings ſafety before his owne ambition, as of an unexperienced young Prince, more willing to hearken to the voyce of flattery, than wiſe direction. The latter Gods power in the weake *ſimplicity* of a ſilly *Mayd*, the inſtrument of this diſcovery. In the briefe touching of which points I hope to finde your patience a little more propitious than the time.

6 As much as the dignity of a *King* tranſcends the *Subject*, is the obligation of the Subject to his King: neither is the duty leſſe wee owe to the ſafety of our Soveraigne, than

than the ſafeguard we challenge in his protection; as the center next under God, from which we derive our honours, and to which we owe our ſervices. Of this duty *Chuſhai*, *Davids* truſty ſervant was not ignorant, neither was his knowledge better tutoured than his induſtry. The ſame hand of Kingly munificence which diſpenſed him his honours, pointed him out the lines of his obliged loyalty; neither was he more ſlacke to obey than *David* to command. *Returne into the City* (quoth *David* to *Chuſhai*) *and ſay unto* Abſolon, *I will be thy ſervant, O King, as I have beene thy fathers ſervant; ſo ſhalt thou defeate the counſell of Achitophel.* Almighty God, who formerly heard *Davids* prayer, directed his advice, and *Chuſhai's* induſtrious loyalty. In undertaking of which deſigne, we ſhall finde *David* bleſſed

in

in ſo good a ſervant, as *Chuſhai* worthy of ſo good a Maſter; whoſe carriage of ſo dangerous a buſineſſe in ſo honeſt and diſcreet a faſhion, ſeemes to coppy out unto us all the offices of an honeſt *Polititian*. In the firſt place, wee finde his obedience and reſolution, neither ſhrinking from the awfull lookes of danger, or forfeyting his Maſters truſt. The apprehenſion of an unexpected friend, or reconciled enemy, might have betrayed his errand to watchfull jealouſie: ſuſpicion might have called his very lookes to examination, and guilty feare, the Child of treaſon, might have delivered him over as a Spye to preſent execution. *Achitophels* deepe inſight in State-affaires, and *Abſolons* confidence in his oracullous advice, might have either ſounded his diſpoſition, or daſht his counſell out of countenance; and then

then ſhould he finde his beſt ſervice rewarded with death or torture: at leaſt, had his meſſage met the beſt ſucceſſe, and ranſomed his Maſter *David* from ſo imminent a conſpiracy, yet according to the rules of worldly policy, hee could not yet ſuppoſe *Abſolons* jealouſie more dangerous than *Davids* obligation. Princes unwillingly owe courteſies greater than themſelves, and commonly preferre a bankrupt debtor before an over-deſerving creditor: as if the very ſight or remembrance of a beneficiall friend ſhould ſeeme a perpetuall exprobration of ingratitude. A ſmaller diſparagement it ſeemes among worldly Tyrants to want Iuſtice than power, rather to be thought willing to offend, than not to be thought able to requite. Theſe Objections urged to *Chuſhais* likely conjecture and politick obſervation, might eaſily have checkt

his

his forwardneſſe in *Davids* ſervice, and ſtrangled his reſolution in the very birth. But hee out of a cleare and couragious ſpirit, neither feares an enemy, nor ſuſpects a friend; nor ſeekes his duty abroad in other mens fore-caſts, which hee might finde at home in his owne boſome. In the ſecond place we may obſerve his truſty love to his maſter *David*; occaſion might here ſeeme to ſmile on his advancement, and *Abſolons* growing fortunes, as the riſing Sunne, might have tempted his ambition: *David* ſeemes ready to depart, and *Abſolon* to enter the Scene of life and Soveraignty: and who in policy would not rather chuſe to have his fortunes to live in *Abſolon*, than dye in *David*? To have betrayed the Fathers truſt, might have ingaged the ſonnes affection; and to raiſe himſelfe a fortune out of his Maſters ruine, though the greateſt

breach

breach in the Lawes of loyalty, had ſeemed one of the chiefeſt Maximes in the art of *Policy*. But he as a faithfull ſubject reſpects not what he might, but what he ought; not ſo much what occaſion may ſeeme to offer, as what religion might be knowne to juſtifie: as one who would rather owe his miſ-fortunes to his truſty ſervice, than his preferment to diſhoneſt treachery. Thirdly we may note his *ſecreſie* and *diſcretion* in managing ſo dangerous and great a project. Hee invaded not the young Princes eares with a ſudden and unexpected onſet, or like an intruding *Polyphragmon* ſhewed himſelfe more officious than wiſe, to out-run the goale, and let ſlippe before occaſion. He expected, not prevēted, his opportunity; and ſuffered *Abſolon* to aske, before he thought it convenient to give his counſel; that *Abſolon* might ſeem

more indebted to *Chuſay's* wiſedome, than *Chuſhay* to *Abſolons* approbation. Neither in his advice did *Chuſhai* ſhew himſelfe factious or unmannerly; hee ſeemed onely to diſlike *Achitophels* direction in this one deſigne, not without a ſilent acknowledgement of his former wiſdome. *The counſell* (ſaith he) *which* Achitophel *hath given at this time is not good.* The advantage of *Achitophels* reputation amongſt thoſe that had tryed his policy, and of the peoples prejudice of ſuch as ſhould contradict, taught *Chuſhai's* diſcretion to diſapprove rather the counſell, than the counſeller, and mitigate his diſſent with ſome colour of former approbation. This deſigne *inſpired* by God himſelfe, directed by *David*, and practiſed by *Chuſhai*, ſeemes to give warrant to this obſervation, *That there is aſwell a good as an evill policy*, as well

well an honeſt and diſcreet conveiance of our actions grounded on religion, as an indirect proceeding ingaged to unwarranted and unlawfull actions. He that would have us to be innocent as *Doves*, hath taught us alſo to be wiſe as *Serpents*: and he that diſpenceth us the means to atchieve our ends, permits us alſo the proper and beſt direction: But how preciſely to divide betwixt an honeſt providence, and unlawfull policy, neither on the one ſide to violate Gods precepts, nor on the other to neglect our owne right, ſeemes a matter as curious to determine, as neceſſary to underſtand. To be Gods ſervant, and the times at once, ſeemes incompatible; eſpecially in ſuch a diſorderly mixture of humane actions: in which (as *Bodin* would counſaile us) it behooves a wiſe man to ſhew himſelfe as various as the ſeaſon. We cannot

not command, but obey occaſion. The meanes and opportunities whereof *Statſmen* take advantage in defeating of their oppoſites, are rather found than choſen; and the manner and direction of our projects rather preſcribed us by chance than skill; as ſuch whoſe cauſality depends not on our will, but obſervation. Nevertheleſſe, betweene the iniquity of our times, & the ſtrictneſſe of a good conſcience, a ſpace is left wide enough to give a paſſage for a religious and wiſe *diſcretion*: and by how much the plots of men and changes of State ſeeme more dangerous to Gods Children; by ſo much is their care and providence in declining the ſnares of the wicked the better warranted. For God condemnes in us as well the neglect of our care, as his *providence*; as one whoſe wiſedome workes ſeldome without, but with,

and

and in our induſtry.

7. The ſecond inſtrumental cauſe which ſhewes it ſelfe in the privation of *Achitophels* counſell, was found in *Abſolons inclination*. *Achitophels* projects having long ſince paſt the firſt conception, are now come unto the very birth: But *Abſolons* unexperienc'd youth, as an unskilfull midwife, made it abortive in the delivery. The ground of his errour I can interpret to be no other than the uſuall diſeaſe of Princes, who had rather to be *ſoothed* than adviſed, and have eares more facile to the tongue of *flattery*, than the heart of *loyalty*. Flattery by *Tacitus* was wel tearmed the old ſickneſſe of the *Romane* Commonwealth, as the love of flattery, the ſtaine and blemiſh of the wiſeſt *Emperours*. Thoſe whom neither the ſword could conquer, nor Treaſon undermine; whom

neither pleaſure allure, or riches perſwade, or greatneſſe tempt to the leaſt diſhonour, onely *flattery* could bring into ſubjection. For as the object of flattery, ſelfe-love, is moſt univerſall, and no where excluded humane nature: So adulation in it ſelfe every where findes occaſion to enter without reſiſtance or impeachment. And whereas all other vices are countermanded and checkt by their contrary vertues, this one ſeemes to challenge a prerogative above vertue her ſelfe, in that ſhee findes acceptance among her enemies, and growes ſtronger by oppoſition. No marvaile than if *Abſolons* youthfull weakneſſe, unable to indure the ſiege of ſo puiſſant a beleaguer, revolted from *Achitophels* (as I may ſay) *irreligious loyalty*, and yeelded to *Chuſhai's pious flattery*. *Chuſhai's* adulatory counſell we may obſerve to conſiſt

ſiſt in three eſpeciall circumſtances : Firſt, that he perſwaded him to enter the field in his owne perſon, and make himſelfe the owner aſwell of the victory, as the ſoveraignty ; as though it had ſeemed a matter not becomming the greatneſſe of a King to owe the honour of Scepters to the valour of a Servant. Secondly, in that his advice he ſeemed more firmly opinionated of the peoples love, and *Abſolons* popular eſtimation. What we deſire, that we eaſily beleeve ; neither prize we our perfections dearer in themſelves than in other mens admiration. Our vertues never pleaſe us better, than when by reflexion they ſeeme augmented in the falſe glaſſe of popular opinion. Neither ſhal *Sophocles* the *Tragedian* be ſo wel accepted in deſcribing mens manners as they were, as *Euripides*, who preſented them as they

ſhould be. More honour found *Homer* in expreſſing mens manners to the beſt, than *Hegemon* to the worſt; and howſoever the two famous Painters, *Pauſon* in limming out the moſt deformed, and *Cleophon* the moſt ſemblable and likely pictures. expreſſed in their worke as much art as induſtry; yet who with *Polignotus* ſo cunningly can handle his penſil, as to paint out mens beſt parts beyond truth or exiſtance, ſhal eaſily purchaſe the reputation of the rareſt workmanſhip. Thirdly, *Chuſhai's* counſell ſeemed more to ayme at *Abſolons honour* and *magnificence*, in that he perſwaded him to oppoſe his Father *David* rather by open ſtrength, than undermining policy. For *Abſolon* to have intrapped his father *David* by a ſecret ambuſh, had beene tearmed rather a treaſon than a victory: and by how much the field is more ample than

the

the closet, seemes a clancular conspiracy inferiour to an open hostile opposition. To secure himselfe into his Fathers Kingdome by cunning engines, might derogate from his valour, and obscure the glory of the Conquest. A pitch'd field would bee thought the best Scene whereon honour ought to display her Ensignes, and the sword the most gracefull actor. These adulatory suggestions of *Chushai*, howsoever prejudiciall *Absolons* designe, had nēvertheless the advantage of *Achitophels* well wayed policy: For as sicke and queasie stomacks had rather appetite should umpire their desires, than judgement; affecting for the time rather to be pleased than profited: so *Chushai*'s advice tempered and seasoned, (as it seemes) to *Absolons* vaine-glorious and ambitious humour, was as

ſoone ſwallowed as ſuggeſted. From which example practiſed by *Chuſhai*, and paralleld by the like inſtances in all times and hiſtories, will ariſe this obſervation, that *flatery is the moſt exquiſite and dangerous policy*. A propoſition requiring no other confirmation than common practiſe, wherein we eſteeme thoſe axiomes eſtabliſhed as the moſt undoubted truth, which by ordinary experience are found moſt ſucceſſefull. A happy ſucceſſe is that which crownes our actions; neither is our naturall knowledge more indebted to ſenſible experiment than our politick to civill obſervation. Hence an ordinary path by policy ſeemes to be trodden out to all preferments through the back-doore of *Adulation*, through which every baſe and undeſerving *Paraſite* ſhall finde an eaſie entrance, while *deſert*, waiting for a turne at the fore-gate,

ſhall

ſhall freeze ere it obtaine admiſſion, and pine away in fruitleſſe expectation. No marvaile then if *flattery*, which ſome have tearmed the *eight liberall Science*, have gotten the ſtart of the other *ſeven*, having beene tryed to be the moſt compendious and ready way to all advancement; at leaſt, one to whom all other profeſſions owe their grace, and direct their ſervice. The curious workmanſhip of *artificers*, the ſubtile nets and pleaſant dreames of *Philoſophers*, the hyred voyce of *Lawyers*, the ſuggred pills of *Phyſitians*, the ſet and formall gravity of *Divines*, the oyly tongues of *Courtiers*, the ſcraping legges of *Peaſants*, ſeeme all corrivalls in courting this proud Miſtreſſe, and proſtituting their ſervice to adulation. Here (Reverend and Beloved) might I in modeſty aske of you, as ſometime the King

of

of *Iſrael* of *Eliſha* the Prophet, *Father ſhall I ſtrike?* But your gravity checks my ſwelling paſſion, and ſeemes to anſwer me with the ſame Prophet, *Thou ſhalt not ſtrike*; What, *wouldſt thou ſmite them whom the Lord hath made already Captive?* I am no ſhameleſſe *Cham* to diſcover a fathers nakednes, no remorſeleſſe *Nero* to open and expoſe the entrailes of my mother. The veile of Charity is in my hand to diſcover a multitude of ſinnes, if I chance to meet them in my paſſage; yet had I rather ever to ſhut mine owne eyes, than behold mine own ſorrow and my mothers ſhame. With *Noahs* two modeſt ſonnes I purpoſely looke awry and goe backwards, not ſo much as to ſee that, which I have no hands to hide, no brow to juſtifie. Should I wander with *Actæon* in ſo wide a Forreſt, my unwary

eye

eye-ſight might unhappily glance on *Diana* naked, and make it ſelfe guilty as well of danger as obſervation. But caſting mine eyes on this learned and brave aſſembly, methinkes I could promiſe my ſelfe as much liberty to ſpeake, as truth prerogative to warrant. Can any preſcription plead a ſtronger immunity from the yoake of flattery, than the Charter of the *Muſes?* or any Nation under Heaven vaunt of a larger freedome than the *Children of the Prophets?* And yet here I may well feare leſt my obſervation may betray flattery to diſcovery, and my language to exception. Affraid I am almoſt to open mine eyes, and looke abroad, leaſt I ſhould eſpye flattery diſpenſing offices, conferring dignities, conniving at offences, violating Priviledges, debaſing Worth, diſgracing Learning, and undermining

honeſty.

honeſty. *Flattery* is not alwayes cloathed in the ſame weeds or colours, ſhe can put on blacke as wel as white; In the ſeate of Iuſtice ſhee can ſhew her ſelfe in purple, in the Court of Princes ſhee can ſtrut in gaudy ſilkes, and (for ought I know) in the chiefeſt place of learning and religion can ſhrowd herſelfe in Scarlet. There was a falſe *Lucifer* among the Angels, a wicked *Saul* among the Prophets, a trayterous *Iudas* among the Apoſtles: and an eaſie iniquity might heretofore have diſcovered a ſycophantick *Shaw* among the Doctors.

——*Satis eſt vidiſſe, revertor.*

If adulation ſhould be now found to ſojourne in our Cloiſters, I could wiſh by *Chuſhai* ſhee ſhould bee taught her beſt office, which is the common good, and the Princes preſervation: ſo ſhould we never feare that cenſure, which *Tacitus* gives

of

of the *Roman Senatours* living under *Tiberius*, that they ambitiouſly ſtood up in Senate, and ſtrove to outvie one the other in ſervile baſeneſſe; much leſſe ſhould we deſerve to be laught at with thoſe *Thebans*, who (as we read in *Iuſtine*) fawning too much on *Philips* greatneſſe, bought their new protection with the loſſe of their ancient liberty. But I have too long intangled my ſelfe in this diſcourſe of *Flattery*, wherein (I feare) I have neither obſerved the time, nor flattered your patience. I muſt now briefly deſcend to the inſtrument of the diſcovery, which in the next place preſents it ſelfe to examination.

8. Almighty God, in bringing to paſſe matters of the greateſt moment, rather makes than findes the fitteſt inſtruments; as one who would rather have the ſubject in-

debted

debted to his choice, than his choice to our eſtimation. Hee to whom it was as eaſie to create, as ſuborne a Creature, could as well give or take occaſion, and for his ſacred purpoſe as ſoone fortifie the weakeſt, as ſingle out the ſtrongeſt. *Achitophels* politick advice ſuggeſted to *Abſolon*, defeated by *Chuſhai*, communicated to *Zadock* and *Abiather* the Prieſts, is at length by *Davids* ſervants diſcovered by a woman, *a ſilly Maid*, whoſe unexperienced youth, unable ſexe, and meaner eſtate, could expreſſe no other character than weakneſſe; is notwithſtanding deſigned out by God, as the choiceſt inſtrument of ſecuring the ſtate of *Iſrael*, and a Kings delivery. The rareſt workmanſhip is commended as much by the worſt as the beſt inſtruments; and it is Gods frequent practice (to ſpeake with the Apoſtle) to

make

make knowne the *riches of his glory on the veſſels of his mercy.* Our Saviour *Chriſt*, to whom all the Kings and Emperours of the earth owed obſervance, whoſe leaſt alliance could have royalized the baſeſt family, was pleaſed notwithſtanding as an inmate to make himſelfe a paſſage into this World through *Maries* neglected wombe: His Cradle was no better than a crib, and his firſt entertainment no higher than *Ioſephs* Fortunes. Neither was his birth a better argument than his life and actions. He might have breathed in the ayre of ſome Princes Court a Kingly education, or committed the tuition of his youth to the inſtitution of the learned *Doctors*: *Rome* was then in her pride, and ſet the foote of her magnificence on the necke of the proudeſt Nations: *Athens*, the Mother of the *Grecian* wiſe-

wiſedome, had long ere this tryumphed in her fruitfull and glorious of-ſpring: and the *Scribes* and *Doctors* at *Ieruſalem* ſitting in *Moſes* Chaire, could have challenged a right beyond the *Delphick* Oracle: and yet we finde neither his knowledge fathered by the moſt famous teachers, nor his manners indebted to the ſevereſt inſtitution. The ſhop of a *Manichanitian* ſeemed his firſt *Academy*; the *Publicans* and *ſinners* his familiar hoſts & friends, and the poore Fishermen returning from their broken nets, admitted into the number of his choyce Diſciples. By which wee Chriſtians may be taught, not to repoſe ſo much confidence in the ſtrength of our mighty and great confederates, as to neglect the induſtry and good will of our weakeſt and meaneſt aſſociates. *Virgils* ſilly Gnat could awake a the ſluggiſh Shepheard from his impre-

improvident ſlumber, to decline the approaching Serpent; and the impotent Piſmire hath bin taught to rouze up the ſleeping Lyon, to make an eſcape from the Hunters ſnares. Thus wee finde the chaine of God Almightyes providence linkt together by ſo many dependant cauſes, began in Gods Counſell, ſeconded by *Davids* prayer, continued in *Chuſhai's* loyalty, and *Abſolons* weakneſſe ſhut up at length in the action of a ſilly Mayd: which as an introduction might lead our diſcourſe a Scene further, to the laſt *Cataſtrophe*, and *Achitophels* bloody Tragedy; to which, having ſo much at this time treſpaſſed on your patience, I ſhall (God willing) engage my next exerciſe.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed al glory, power, and praiſe, now and for evermore, Amen.

Achito-

Achitophel,

OR,

The wicked Polititian.

2 SAMUEL Chap. 17. Ver. 23.

And when Achitophel *ſaw that his counſell was not followed, he ſadled his aſſe, and aroſe, and gate home, and ſet his houſe in order, and hanged himſelfe, and was buried in the ſepulcher of his Fathers.*

The third part.

HE muſt needs runne, whom deſperation leads, and the Devill drives. That old Serpent, that firſt ſet miſchiefe a worke, ſcornes

ſcornes as much to retire, as delights to perſevere, and neither ſlacks or ſtops his pace till he finde the place of execution. How farre his wicked induſtry hath gone hand in hand with *Achitophels* treacherous deſignes, your preſent memory may witneſſe in my former exerciſe and your attention. The defeate of his pernicious counſell, with the cauſes preſentiug themſelves to the horrour of a guilty conſcience, ſeconded as well with outward diſgrace as inward diſcontent, turnes his owne weapon againſt himſelfe, and makes his policy the moſt exquiſite inſtrument of his owne deſtruction. This great Polititian, whom as the Oracle of God, the people of *Iſrael* had never ſuſpected of inconſtancy, or accuſed of indiſcretion; whoſe wiſe ſervice had inſtructed *Abſolon* in all his parts, and ſo judiciouſly (as it were)

chalkt

chalkt out unto him the way to Soveraignty, might ſeeme to deſerve more in the eyes of *Abſolon* than miſpriſion. What leſſe reward can our beſt induſtry expect, or gratitude expreſſe than acknowledgment or approbation? What greater evidence of preſent ability can our underſtandings miniſter, or our hopes promiſe, than the ſtampe and ſeale of our former actions? Had *Chuſhai* ever ſhewed himſelfe ſo wiſe, or *Achitophel* ſo weake, that *Chuſhai* in the ſcale ſhould overpoize *Achitophel?* Shall the fancy of a ſhallow Courtier conquer the wit and experience of ſo great a Stateſ-man? and the ſmooth tongue of flattery over-reach the deepe grounds of a ſetled judgment? What then remaines for *Achitophel*, than by his ſudden flight to expreſſe his noble indignation, and foreſhew *Abſolons* ruine in his owne.

He

He will hang himſelfe firſt to teach *Abſolon* the way to the ſame end, and to outſtrip him in the laſt act, rather politickly prevent than baſely feare the ſhamefull ſtroke of execution. *And* Achitophel *ſaw that his counſell was not followed, &c.*

2. The Scene whereon we now enter, contaynes the laſt actions of *Achitophel*, whoſe *Cataſtrophe* ſhuts up all in his ſhamefull end, & honourable buriall. The actions preceding his death, are expreſſed in theſe foure circumſtances: 1 *That he ſadled his aſſe.* 2 *That heo went home.* 3 *That he put his houſe in order.* 4 *That he hanged himſelfe.* In the firſt, we may obſerve his Tyranny, in impoſing on his ſilly Aſſe the burthen of his tranſgreſſion. In the ſecond his Treachery, in leaving his Maſter in his greateſt extremity. In the third his worldly providence, in preferring the preſervation

ſervation of his temporall eſtate, before the preſervation of his owne ſoule. In the fourth his deſperate *execution* of himſelfe in diſtruſt of Gods mercy, and daring his juſtice to the laſt extremity. The latter clauſe concernes his ceremonious funerall; which howſoever in it ſelfe a paſſion as we reſpect *Achitophel* as the ſubject; yet ſo farre as it may have reference to his former teſtament and ordination, wherein this may ſeeme included, it may be tearmed an action wherein hee ſhewed himſelfe ambitious to file and furbiſh over the ſtaine of his ſhamefull life, and end with an honourable buriall. Theſe are the liſts of my preſent meditations, wherein as God ſhall enable my diſcourſe, and your Chriſtian patience ſecond, I ſhall proceed in order, and firſt of the firſt, [*He ſadled his aſſe.*]

3 So contagious hath beene the ſinne

ſinne of our firſt Parents, that onely uſurped juriſdiction on mankinde, the ſpawne of our Father *Adam*; but invaded without reſiſtance Natures univerſall Monarchy: in ſo much, as the Heavens, Elements, Plants, and Beaſts themſelves by the divine inſtitution of their creation, as diſdaining to ſerve ingratitude, are by the Apoſtle ſaid to groane under their tedious burthen, and deſire to be at liberty. Why the creature ſhould deſire this freedome, foure reaſons are alleaged by *Peter Martyr* on the *Romans*. Firſt, becauſe of his perpetuall turmoyles and labours, ſerving onely for the uſe of man. Secondly, becauſe they together ſuffer the ſame affliction. Thirdly, out of the ſympathy and fellowfeeling of one anothers adverſity. Fourthly, and laſtly, which is the greateſt of all, becauſe they

are cõſtrained to becom the ſervile inſtrument of ſin,& by conſequence the ſubjects of Gods fury. This wrath of God, though generall (as we have ſaid) to all the creatures, we finde no where more legible than in the ſilly Aſſe ; a beaſt created as it might ſeeme: to torture it ſelfe, to ſupply the defect of mans induſtry : wherein, according to the *Egyptian Hieroglyphicks*, nature ſeems to have patternd forth unto us the exact Image of *Patience*, *Fortitude*, and *Frugality*, gifts not unworty the choyce of the moſt generous temper, had not the ſinne of man expoſed them rather to ſcorne than imitation. Such is the unchriſtian cenſure of our ſupercilious times, who diſdaine to ſalute vertue, except ſhe come accoutred in Golden garments. Of this poore Creature, notwithſtanding, whereof they ſcorne the name, they cannot

cannot want the uſe : the ignominy of a ſervile diſpoſition, is the reward of his beſt ſervice; the profitable fruites of his painfull induſtry, the glory and improvement of his Maſters ambitious husbandry. If ſuch injuſtice offered by a man to a ſervile beaſt ſeeme oppoſite to the Lawes common equity, which commands every thing his owne : how huge in the eyes of every Chriſtian Iudge ſwels their tyranny, who command their ſervants and inferiours to carry the burthen of their tranſgreſſions ; as though they meant to ride them on the ſpurre, with themſelves to hell. The obedience of *Achitophels* Aſſe to ſerve him in this wicked action was onely paſſive ; as of one to whom the law of nature had preſcribed no other rule than his maſters reines: but the ſacred Image of God

ſtampt in the reaſonable ſoule of man is to us both Law and liberty; as well to preſerve the rights of Magiſtrates, as our owne priviledge. An obedience we juſtly owe to our ſuperiours, both *active* and *paſſive*, ſo farre forth as it may ſtand with the right of nature, and Gods honour, as that which God expreſſely commands, and no community can want. But when the ſword of the Magiſtrate pretends a Title to any part of divine prerogative, it findes alwayes in the way of reſiſtance the right of the cauſe or ſincerity of a good conſcience, whereon, as one a rock of Adamant, it may ſooner hack it ſelfe in pieces, than make a breach for entry. Hence wiſe Magiſtrates may be taught to exact no more of their inferiours than their commiſſion from God dares to countenance, or their duty

duty to him commands ; much leſſe in regard of their owne worth to ſlight the good offices of the meaneſt ſervant. Our conſciences and opinions are ſeldome ſo flexible as our joynts to fawne on greatneſſe : neither is the judgement of the wiſeſt Governour able ſo much to challenge a Monarchy in the weakeſt underſtanding, as to command opinion. *Balaams* Aſſe could ſee the Angel of the Lord with his Sword drawne againſt him, when his Maſters eyes were ſhut; and therefore had good reaſon to leave beating his poore beaſt, when hee opened his mouth to prevent his danger. But if any wiſe Chriſtian deſire the miniſteriall offices of theſe ſervile creatures, let them imitate the example of our Saviour CHRIST, who came meekely on an Aſſe, ri-

riding into *Ieruſalem*, where the Enſignes of gracious acceptance, & the ſhouts of *Hoſanna's* applauded his arrivall: not as *Achitophel*, who roſe in haſte, and went home to his houſe; not like our Saviour to ſave, but like himſelfe to betray his friend. Which is the next circumſtance which awaits our obſervation [*And he aroſe, and went home to his houſe.*

4. The trueſt touchſtone of friendſhip is *adverſity*, which commonly unmasketh our enemies to diſcovery; and ſingles out our beſt friends for tryal. Here *Achitophel*, as an ill Actor, fainted in the laſt Scene, and choſe rather to ſhew himſelfe what he was, than what he ought. His Maſter *Abſolon*, whom he had engaged to ſo great a danger, he left to greater: Sinke hee might, or ſwimme for him, as the windy guſt of his new counſell, or the

the inconſtant tide of occaſion pleaſed to befriend him. His great hopes grounded on the riſe of *Abſolon*, having promiſed ſo much in the bud, beganne to wither ere they ſaw the bloſſome: and a vain project it ſeemed unto him to venture with a bankrupt, and out of his maſters blaſted field to expect a harveſt. If *Abſolon* will needes wed himſelfe to his owne will, and his ſeducers counſell, let him runne his owne hazard: *Achitophel* ſtands engaged no further than his owne direction. If *Abſolon* fall ſo ſhort of his ambitious wiſhes, as *Achitophels* wiſe augury, let him ſuffer alone himſelfe, as not deſerving *Achitophels* pitty or ſociety. Hee was once warned, and therefore twice armed, to withſtand ſo weake an aſſaylant as *Chuſhay* his feigned friend. And why ſhall *Achitophel*

ſhew himſelfe ſo ſuperſtitious to obſerve him who neglects himſelfe, and ſlights his friends? Two dangers here offer themſelves at once; the one the deſertion of his young Maſter, the other the neglect of his owne eſtate. But with a Politician the choice is eaſie; and therefore it is time to hye him home to order his owne houſe, which had left the Common-wealth in a cumbuſtion. His maſter might aſwell finde him abſent, as neglect him preſent, and ſooner meete him in his death than counſaile. From whoſe example a good Chriſtian may be taught ſo much policy, to trye his friends in adverſity, ere he truſt them in proſperity. Thoſe Vermines which undermine the houſe, are taught to runne from the ruine, and quit that manſion which preſerved them, becauſe they

they never loved it further than it ſerved their owne purpoſe. But a true friend hides himſelfe as a gloworme obſcured in the day of proſperity to reſerve his light for the obſcure night of adverſity. *Chuſhay*, as we have formerly ſhewed, had leſſe reaſon to ſuſpect *Achitophels* head, to want *Abſolons* arme, than *Davids* arme to want direction: yet to preferre the loyalty of a friend, he choſe rather to caſt himſelfe on raſh adventure, than knowne experience; and hazard the Shipwracke of himſelfe to ſave a friend. If any man ſhould demand how farre friendſhip may challenge a juriſdiction in our converſation? God will anſwer: that Hee muſt firſt joyne ere wee ſhake hands. A true and juſt amity ſhines not ſo much in the ſubject wherein it growes, as on the object whereon

it growes ; as that which desires not so much to purchase as to deserve applause. It was a poore shift of *Naaman* out of the sincerity of his unfeigned love to excuse his feigned Idolatry in this sort. *When I come into the Temple of Rimmon, and my master boweth downe to the Image and leaneth on my shoulder, and he leaneth downe with me, the Lord be mercifull unto me in this thing.* Had his eye offended him, or his hand mistooke his message, hee had not onely sufficient, but command to pluck out the one, and cut off the other : much more are we warranted to dissolve the strongest contract betwixt outward friends, where God shakes his rod betweene a friends impiety and our affection. But neither of these motives found footing in *Achitophel;* designe. Had the distrust, or dislike of his masters

cause

cauſe diſſwaded furtherance, hee had not ſuffered him ſo farre to runne beyond prevention. Had his motive afterwards grounded it ſelfe on juſtice, he might have turned his counſaile another way, rather to his maſters good, than his owne ruine; at leaſt by his ſubmiſſion hee might have peeced up this breach of treaſon, and have caſt his fortunes on ſo favourable a calme as *Davids* attonement with his deare, though rebellious *Abſolon*. But *Abſolons* caſe was deſperate, his owne treaſon evident, *Davids* remiſſive pardon unlikely, his owne houſe unſettled: and therefore out of the grounds of his owne worldly policy, hee thought it more expedient to ariſe and goe home to his houſe, and to ſet his houſe in order: which is the third, and comes next in order to be handled.

5. In

5. In ſetting of *Achitophels* houſe in order, we may by way of explication obſerve two points; Firſt, what we ought to underſtand by his *houſe*; ſecondly, wherein this *ordering of his houſe* conſiſted. A houſe, ſo farre as the word בית in the originall language renders it, ſignifies as much as an *artificial receptacle fitted for habitation*: whence afterwards by an apt *Metonimy*; expeſſing the place containing for the perſons contained, it was taken for a *Family*, as wee finde in Scripture mention made of the houſe of *Saul*, and the Houſe of *David*: in which ſence Οἰκία, or a houſe is by *Ariſtotle* in the firſt of his *Politicks*, defined to bee *a daily Society of people dwelling together*: and howſoever the name of *Family* among the Ancients ſeeme to derive his original from the ſociety of divers

divers ſervants living under owne roofe and regiment : yet uſe hath taught it ſo farre to enlarge it ſelfe, as to ſignifie a company conſiſting of three eſſentiall parts, to wit, of the Husband, and the Wife, of the Father, and the Sonne, of the Maſter, and the Servant ; the due adminiſtration of which, wherein every member anſwers an harmony to preſerve the whole, wee call *Oeconomie*, or good Husbandry : an inſtitution founded on the Law of Nature, as the firſt and ſtrongeſt band of humane ſociety, and the firſt ground-worke of a common-wealth. The ſetting of ſuch a houſe in order, which is the next point to be ſcanned, is either the generall adminiſtration of a family, which wee may call Huſbandry ; or elſe a finall determination of matters as wee would they ſhould ſtand at the time of

our

our death, expreſſed in our laſt wil and teſtament.

Herein *Achitophel*, although a wicked caytiffe, ſcarce deſerving a gord Epithete, ſeemed to ſhew as much piety as policy, in ſetling his eſtate by providence while he lived, which after his death might be ſhipwrackt by diſſention or confuſion. So much of the image of God he had left undefaced in him, as to ſhew him ſome obſcure glimpſe of eternity, to ſeeke that being in poſterity by propagation, which the times diſaſters were readier to cancell than preſerve. A preſident ſurmounting the example of many Chriſtians of our times, who imagining all the world to be borne for them, and them for themſelves, neglect former preſidents, and ſtop the paſſage to all poſterity, as if the line drawne out ſo many ages from their firſt father *Adam*, ſhould break off

with

with themſelves, and attaine its higheſt pitch in their perfections. It was a notable though arrogant reply of *Iphicrates* to *Hermodius* in *Plutarch*, boaſting too much of his continued line and ancient nobility; *Nobilitas mea in me incipit, tua in te deſyt*; Wherein he vaunted himſelfe by providence and vertue to have ſo much improved as the other to have decocted his fortunes and ancient family. To lend poſterity a head, may to a wiſe man ſeeme a greater glory than to borrow from anceſtry a tayle: and on the other ſide, to play away in ſport our predeceſſors labours, a greater diſhonour than to piſſe on our Parents aſhes, or raze their monuments. Amongſt all the temporall bleſſings of Almighty God, promiſed or derived as rewards to his faithfull ſervant, I finde none greater in holy Writ than the multiplying of their ſeed,

and

and ſpreading of their Family: *Behold* (ſaith God to *Abraham*) *I will make of thee a mighty people*, and that which God in his eſpeciall favour prizes as ſo great a guerdon to his beſt favorites, ſhall unworthy man eſteeme a trifle, and value ſo farre below the rate? *Hee that provides not for his family, is worſe than an infidell*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*. Not (I ſuppoſe) that a provident Heathen was abſolutely to be preferred before a negligent profeſſor: but that in this compariſon of ſetling a mans eſtate after him in regard of poſterity; a wiſe infidell might challenge a precedency before a careleſſe Chriſtian; according to that of our Saviour in the Goſpell, *The Children of this world are wiſer in their generation than the children of light*. Herein *Achitophels* policy ſhooke hands with honeſty which ſeldome met before

before in conſort : but no ſooner could they meete but part, as if they meant to meete no more. Hee, ſetled his worldly eſtate on earth, but forgot his eternall hope in heaven. He reſerved to himſelfe out of all his Legacies the worme of a guilty conſcience, which he could as well ſhake off as himſelfe; which leads our diſcourſe to a ſecond obſervation ariſing from this point, *That worldly wiſe politicians proove moſt unprovident for future life, and preferre temporall bleſſings before eternall happineſſe.*

6 *Where a mans treaſure is, there will his heart be alſo*, ſaith our Saviour. Whence a Reaſon may bee rendred why *Achitophel* deſpairing of any portion among the Saints in Heaven, ſet his minde to diſpoſe of poſſeſſions here on earth. *Riches*, which the wiſeſt ſort

of

of *Philoſophers* have eſteemed no other than the complement of temporall felicity, are the maine of their ambition, while the fruition of the eternall joyes in Heaven ſtands as doubtfull in their hopes, as unſetled in their opinion. But this providence in diſpoſing worldly affaires, at the beſt can be reputed no other, than the child of *Nature*, whoſe mole-eyes through the glimmering light of humane reaſon, can hardly pierce ſo farre as its owne ſpheare; much leſſe through the clouds of humane ignorance, and the worlds contagious fogs, open to it ſelfe a paſſage to that eternall glory, to which none but the light of grace can direct or command an entrance. No marvaile then if worldly men, having all their cares bounded in this world, runne alwayes in the ſame circle, and reſpect onely their owne center,

ter, diſdaiming (as it were) any intereſt in any ſuperiour Orbe This they eſteeme their higheſt heaven, without the which, with *Ariſtotle* they can imagine neither *Locus*, nor *Tempus*; neither place to contayne their treaſure, nor time to adde to their mortality; if at any time by the permiſſive indulgence of Almighty God, ſome ſparkle of grace preſents it ſelfe, it is but as the lightning, no ſooner ſeene, but loſt; enough to ſhew it ſelfe, but too little to give direction: enough for their curioſity to diſpute, but too much for their faith to apprehend: And therefore rather reſolve they to ſet up their reſt in this world, which they know; than to hazard themſelves on ſo dangerous a diſcovery, wherein they ſhould ſhew themſelves at leaſt diffident, if not deſperate.

This ſeemes to have bin the reſolution

lution of wicked *Caine*, who although ſhut out from GODS preſence, ſought out a place in the land of *Nod* to build a City which might beare his name, and preſerve his Family. Himſelfe, as it were, branded with the black coale of reprobration, he quickly ſubmitted to perdition in this deſperate reſolution, *My ſinne is greater than can be forgiven me.* His poſterity hee committed rather to chance and policy, than to Gods protection; as though his owne care had beene ſufficient to undermine the Divine providence; or at leaſt he had proved ſo good a proficient in the Schoole of policy, as to worke his owne deſperate fortunes to his ſonnes advantages. Amongſt many ſuch examples of this kinde, which in this age of ours are too too frequent, I finde none more remarkable than of a certaine

Lawyer,

Lawyer, whom *Bellarmine* (as himſelfe reports) in the time of his ſickneſſe comming to viſite, and urging unto prayer and confeſſion, replyed, that hee conld wiſh that prayer were made for his wife and children, whoſe welfare in this world he greatly tendred ; for himſelfe as loſt and deſperate, he gave over to perdition : *Bellarmines* obſervation of this deſperate man, might me thinks have opened his eyes to have ſeene that myſtery of iniquity cloſed up in their *Babyloniſh Hierarchy*. How many thouſand ſoules whom they ought to purchaſe unto Chriſt, ſell they dayly unto Sathan to buy their owne gaine or greatneſſe ; as if they conſpired all in one to ſhipwracke their hopes of another life in Heaven, to bolſter up a *Papall Monarchy* heere on earth. Their Fire of Purgatorie had long ſince

ſince bin extinct, had it not maintained the *Popes kitchin*: Their *Indulgences* had long ſince waxed ſtale, and laine upon their hands, had not the coſtly marriages of the *Popes Neeces*, or rather *Daughters*, ſet them out in a new Edition, to make them vendible. The Idoll of their pretended *Supremacy* had wanted adoration, and *Peters imaginary Chaire* bin broken, and hurled to the ground, had not covertouſneſſe on the one ſide, pompe and ambition on the other, as two ſupporters laboured to keepe it upright. And little could Saint *Paul* himſelfe effect by his powerfull preaching among ſuch *Athenians*, with whom there is never wanting a *Demetrius*, a Silver-Smith; who, leaſt his ſhrines ſhould want ſale, will ſtoutly ſtand up for the honour of *Diana*' Temple: Well may wee call that a meere *politicke religion*,

religion, or rather a *masked Atheiſme*, wherein Gods pretended ſervice is ſet up as a piller to underprop an *Antichriſtian Hierarchy*, and *Religion*, which ſhould command our beſt obſervance, becomes the ſlave and ſervant to ambition. Herein *Achitophels* deſigne ſeemes to fal ſhort of their induſtry: He ſets his houſe in order, (for ought we find) without any ſence of Religion or prejudice to Gods Church: Theſe men uſe the Sword of the Church againſt Religion, conſtrayning her at once, both to inflict, and ſmart at her owne wounds. *Achitophel* left the Common-wealth in a combuſtion, to ſet his owne houſe in order: but theſe fire-brands of State, ſet their owne houſes in order firſt, that they may the more eaſily diſturbe the good temper of a ſetled Common-wealth. *Achitophel*, for ought we know, ſhut up all his treacherous

cherous deſignes in his owne execution ; leaving as hereditary rather the ſtaine than the guilt of his odious Treaſon to poſterity. But theſe *Ieſuiticke factors* unwilling to cut off the entraile of their trayterous inclinations eyther by deſpaire or repentance; like a brood of vipers bequeath a legacy of their venemous quality unto their offſpring : in which as out of a *Cockatrices* egges is hatched, preſerved, and multiplyed the accurſe(ſpawne of treachery and ſedition. Which laſt clauſe leads our diſcourſe to a ſecond point, to wit, the conſideration of *Achitophels* death in that hee hanged himſelfe, which comes next in order to be handled.

7 In *Achitophels* death you may with me obſerve two eſpeciall points : 1. *The cauſe.* 2. *The manner.* The cauſe grounded on the motive fore-mentioned in my former exer-

exerciſe was *Deſpaire* : The manner of his death as ſhamefull and ignominious as his life and action. To begin with deſpaire, wee ſhall finde it an infirmity of mans nature; rather deſerving mens pitty than indignation. A child it is whom the guilt of ſinne begets on an evill conſcience ; which no ſooner beholds the light, but covets darkneſſe, as if it made no more uſe of life, than to inſtruct him in the next way to death. In this bottomleſſe pit of *deſpaire*, wherein no paſſenger could caſt Anchor, *Achitophel* now findes himſelfe plunged, and therefore as arreſted by deaths immediate Sergeant, prepares for his next appearance. Better' dye once than feare alwayes, and ſhut up all miſchiefes in one death, than ſpinne out life in many miſchiefes. Thoſe lofty Scenes of State wherein *Achitophel* hath

either hitherto acted himſelfe, or prompted others, muſt not ſhut up in an ill *Cataſtrophe*, and who fitter to end, than he who began this Stately Tragedy? To live at another mans benevolence, ſeemes the ſmalleſt priviledge of a ſubject: to dye at his owne command, the greateſt prerogative of a King. A baſe headsman muſt not ſhare ſo great a glory as the chopping off a head enricheđ with ſo much policy; nor Iuſtice ſeeme to entreat any other hands than his owne in his ſtately execution. Behold here the laſt reſolution of this matchleſſe Politician, propoſed afterward (as it ſeemes) as a patterne to many high ſpirits amongſt the *Heathen*; whoſe judgements infatuated with falſe principles, miſconſter the badge of cowardiſe, for the moſt honourable ſcale of courage: as if it were a poynt of valour to ſhake

hands

hands with death, and faintly give themſelves over to his mercy, with whom as an enemy they ought to combate. True honour never feares to ſtare death in the face, but ſeldome courts it as a friend, often as a corrivall it ſtruggles with it for victory, but never gives up the hilts, or cries quarter, till over-maſtred by a greater and diſproportioned ſtrength; he findes them wrested from his hands. So great an impreſſion notwithſtanding got this wicked opinion of *ſelfe-killing* amongſt the ancient *Romans*, that a ſpeedy diſpatch of our ſelves in caſe of extreamities, ſeemed to challenge as much honour as with a Chriſtian it deſerveth ſhame; as wee finde it not recorded onely, but in a manner recommended by that turne-coate *Lypſius*, out of the principles of his *Stoical Philoſophy*;

whoſe broken rudiments he had (as it ſeemes) better conned than *Chriſtianity*. But how farre out of our voluntary diſpoſition we ought to entertaine the ſtroak of death, is not eaſie to determine without diſtinction. A concurrence of our wils we may interpret two wayes: either for a *Paſſive* obedience, indebted rather to conſtraint than choyce, wherein Nature ſubmits her ſelfe to Iuſtice or neceſſity: or an *Active* violence derived for the moſt part from feare or raſhneſſe, wherein reaſon ſuffers her ſelfe to be led captive by boyſtrous Phrenſie, arming the ſtrength of unwilling nature againſt her owne boſome, and life her ſweet companion. The former concurrence of our aſſent, or at leaſt ſubmiſſion to ſuch extremities, we finde warranted not onely by permiſſion but command, ſo farre forth, as

the

the Iuſtice of the cauſe conſpiring with a regulated conſcience imports neceſſity. Thoſe bleſſed *Martyrs* of the Church, whoſe glorious wounds and skarres ſhine as ſo many orient Pearles in their white robes of ſanctity, have markt and ſeald them out to Poſterity as examples of the higheſt imitation. Thoſe valiant *Champions* in defence of their Countrie and Religion expoſed to the mercileſſe jawes of death, or the bloody phangs of uncertaine hazards in a Chriſtian warrefare, what age ſo envious which will not crowne with preſent honour, and regiſter to future admiration? Yea, wicked malefactors themſelves, in whom Iuſtice often prevents Nature in an untimely execution, may ſeeme to cancell ſome part of their former guilt in giving, by their ſubmiſſive patience the

ſtrictneſſe of the Law a juſt ſatisfaction. And therefore without queſtion the ſweetneſſe of life ought not to ſhare ſo great a moyty in our affections, as to ſhut out our obedience, when either *Religion* ſtands at ſtake, or our *Countrey* craves our aſſiſtance, or *Juſtice* challengeth her prerogative. The other expoſure of mens lives to certaine death, where neceſſity on either hand threatens apparant ruine without reprivall, I could charitably interprete, as of *Sampſons* deſigne in razing the houſe to his owne and the *Philiſtians* deſtruction, or of *Lucans* and *Seneca's* advice in making choyce of their owne death by cutting their owne veines: but that Gods Almighty Providence in our greateſt deſignes ſhewes it ſelfe moſt pregnant beyond mens expectation, and commands rather our

our patience than prevention. But for ſuch untimely and unnaturall deſignes, wherein the hands are made inſtrumentall executioners to the heart, as prickt on with the horrour of a guilty conſcience, and diſtruſt of Gods favours, neither *Chriſtianity* gave ever preſident, nor *Stoicall Philoſophy* among all her ſtrict axiomes a warranted precept; as an action odious both to God and man, which begins with ſinne, and ends with ſhame. Which leades our Diſcourſe from the immediate cauſe of his death, to wit, his *Deſpaire*, to the manner and quality of it, his *ſhamefull end.*

8 *Shame* is the ſworne ſervant unto ſinne, an odious, but officious Hagge; whom life could never entertaine without ſorrow, or death eaſily ſhake off, till memory forfeit her Records to

time, and time to oblivion. Tis the miſery of guilt with conſtraint to cheriſh in her boſome the childe ſhee hates, and bequeath ſuch a fatall iſſue to poſterity, whoſe browes ſhall carry the true ſtampe and character of her owne deformity. And how great a ſoveraignty ſoever ſinne might ſeeme to challenge in the ſpheare of humane Nature, which our firſt Parents by their diſobedience forfeited to her juriſdiction; yet ſhall in the end finde himſelfe conquered; in that ſinne living for the moſt part in darkeneſſe, ſhuts up all her malice with death, while her untoward babe ſhall ſurvive to upbraide her actions in the light, and arraigne her after death at the barre of Iuſtice. Had *Achitophel* beene as provident to prevent an ill report after death, as ambitious to

pre-

preſerve reputation during life, he had meaſured his actions by the better end, or at leaſt in the event directed his worſt ends to better purpoſe, than loſe at the laſt caſt which he was ſo long a winning, or have ſtained the fame of his former actions with ſo baſe an execution. His eminent gifts of *Wiſedome*, howſoever ſordid and wicked in themſelves, as directed rather to his owne private ends, than Gods glory or the honour of the Common-wealth; might notwithſtanding out of a fore-conceived opinion of his worth, have found in the common voyce, a favourable conſtruction, *Old vices* commonly finde welcome under new names, and nothing ſo witty as *Sinne* to invent new Epithites to ſhut out ſhame, and entertaine plauſibility. *Luxury* and *Leachery* the bane of Na-

ture may paſſe currant under the Title of *good-fellowſhip* : *Ignorant pride* and *ſupercilious contempt* may call themſelves retyred *gravity*, or *ſtout magnanimity* : *Griping coveteouſneſſe* and *baſe Vſury*, may finde entertainment under the ſhew of *thrifty husbandry* : *Tyranny* and *Oppreſſion* ſhall be ſtiled *ſevere Iuſtice* and *ſtrict government*. At leaſt from each of theſe common connivence would make a ſhift to extract ſomewhat which might ſavour of ingenuity to cover guilt from the ſtrict inquiſition of truth, and ſtoppe the harſh mouth of cenſure ; wherein at leaſt it ſhould ſhew it ſelfe no leſſe ingenious than *Ariſtotle* in his *Ethicks*, who in painting out to the life his Idoll Μεγαλοψυχία, is obſerved to have ſtolen the chiefeſt markes of many notorious vices to character one imaginary vertue.

No

No worſe but rather better favour might *Achitophels* life ſeeme to have deſerved, eſpecially amongſt the common rout of his inferiours, who valuing the worth of their ſuperiours, imagine them as eminent in wiſedome as they tranſcend in greatneſſe, as if they conceived them fathioned in another mould, and wrought to another nature; that the leaſt ſlippes or ſcapes which in ordnary men wee can interpret no other than the effect of infirmity, ſhould in them bee thought to proceede from premeditated counſaile and mature deliberation, as Critically directed to ſome eſpecial lend or other in the State. But admit his ſinfull projects had laine open to diſcovery, yet ſavouring of a reaching wit, or ſeaſoned with diſcretion, they might ſeeme rather amongſt Vulgar judgements

ments, the fruits of politick prevention than humane weakneſſe. Our intellectuall gifts we commonly value above our *Moral* vertues, and therefore hold it a ſmaller diſparagement to be taxed of *diſhoneſty* than indiſcretion; as if wee rather coveted an inheritance heere amongſt the children of this world, than to have our Names enrolled with the children of light.

Thus farre *Achitophel* had carryed his matters in ſuch fathion as might ſpeake his wiſdome, though not his honeſty. Had *Abſalon* through his advice, advanced himſelfe to the Throne of *Iſrael*, his notorious Treaſon had paſſed for profound policy; neither could the world ever tearme that act treaſon, which is of a King, or for a Kings promotion. Had *Achitophels* project falue below expectation, (as he did afterward) it was

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Abſolons weakneſſe to reject advice, not *Achitophels* to ſuggeſt the beſt counſaile. But ſhift the Scene, and let the ſelfe-ſame Theater, which even now found him plotting *Abſolons* advancement, contriving the meanes and manner of his owne death; and you would imagine him all this while but to have perſonated a wiſe man, and now in the end to reſume his proper habite; like a certaine beaſt of *Scythia* recorded by *Pliny* in his naturall hiſtory, whom he reports to be able to change himſelfe into all variety of ſhapes and colours, yet returning to his owne forme, expreſſes the reſemblance of an *Aſſe*: A good Embleme of a wicked Polititian, who ſitting as it were at the ſterne of State, and holding the Helme in his hands, muſt of neceſſity varie himſelfe a Thouſand wayes to obey all winds

winds, and ſecond all tydes. But *Nature*, which is the worſt diſſembler of guilty actions, will one time or other betray it ſelfe to diſcovery, or at leaſt, plaine dealing *Death* will ſtrip him naked, and lay him open unto ſhame, and leave him as a foole to mens contempt, and Gods vengeance. Shame and reproach, the moſt unwelcome gueſts to *Achitophel* in his life, are here invited as friends to beare him to his Sepulchre; and the kind and manner of Death moſt odious to God and man, is thought the ſafeſt and ſweeteſt in his fooliſh choyce: Among ſo many wayes whereby every man may make himſelfe a paſſage unto death, hee muſt needs chuſe the worſt to dye as a dogge on a tree, and make himſelfe guilty as well of his ſhamefull death, as the ignominious motive Death is the common deſtiny of mankinde;

to

to feare or wiſh for death, the marke of a coward, and ſhame of a man: To end our courſe of life in a warme bed, is Natures Tribute, and the crowne of ſilver haires: to cancell cares in the field by the hand of an enemy, is the chance of warre, and the honour of a Souldier: To die by the ſentence of Iuſtice, and the ſtroke of the Executioner, a ſatisfaction of the Law, and expiation of the guilt. But to dye out of cowardiſe and deſpaire, to dye by the enforced violence of our owne hands, to dye as a Theefe on a Tree, not expiating the guilt of ſin by giving ſatisfaction to the Law, or affording Nature any right in expectation, and which is more than all the reſt, to quite the vexations of this world, to incurre greater in the next, and to tread with unreſolved feete that unknowne path of death, whoſe common entrance

ſhuts

ſhuts up in as doubtfull an end, as celeſtiall joyes and infernall Torments; what ſetled judgment will not brand with the odious blot of extreamest folly? in ſight and comparison of which, the greateſt vanity in the world ſhould loſe her name, and ſeeme diſcretion. Here we may ſee the weakneſſe of humane wiſdome tutoured by Temptation, and directed by the common enemy of mankind; as the ſtrength of *Sampſon* over-mastered by the wiles of *Dalilah*; which commonly affords the owner no greater courteſie than confuſion, and their names and memory no other Trophie than a living ſhame, or a lying ſepulchre. Which by occaſion directs our inquiry to the third and laſt action, preordained (as it ſeemes) by himſelfe in his life, but executed by his friends after death, his pompous buriall:

He

He was buried in the ſepulchre of his Fathers.

9 Whether this laſt action of *Achitophel* be rather to be aſcribed to *Achitophel* himſelfe, as preſcribed by his laſt will and Teſtament, or to his Children, as their laſt duty and obligation to their dead Parent, we will make no long diſpute. It ſeemes an act of both, wherein either party may ſhare an intereſt, as commanded by the one, and executed by the other. From each obſervation may copy out unto us ſome uſefull doctrine for inſtruction. In *Achitophels* providence, in ſeeking to preſerve his name and memory in ſo ſlight a Trophy as a Stone or Statue, wee may read the ſhallow reach of many Polititians of our Age, ambitiouſly ſetting up their garniſhed Sepulchres in Churches and high places, as Idols of admiration to be worſhipt by ignorant

norant ſpectators: which notwithſtanding in a judicious cenſure live onely for a time, to upbraid their folly, and fall after a time into the duſt and aſhes, as the rotten bones they ſhrowd up in oblivion.

Envious Time, which hath eaten out the workmanſhip of ſo many famous Architects, and left not ſo much as ſtones or ruines for Antiquity to boaſt, or poſterity to admire; by the mouth of Hiſtory his beſt Secretary, might have diſcovered the weakneſſe of ſuch confidence of ſuch, as grounds it ſelfe on ſuch uncertainty. *Babel*, the greateſt ambition of humane induſtry, undertaken (as it were) by the joynt handy-craft of mankinde, neither by diſparity of religions, or difference of languages as yet divided into factions; wherein (as *Philo Judæus* notes, and Text of holy Scripture not obſcurely intimates)

mates) the chiefeſt men of ranke and eſtimation, in engraven ſtones ſought to preſerve their memory; what other Legacy in her fall hath ſhe bequeathed to our obſervation, than the want of diſcovery, the whetſtone of diligent *Antiquaries*, and tortures of the moſt curious inquiſition? How much better is the content of a quiet Conſcience, grounded on the aſſurance of Gods promiſes for future happineſſe, than ſuch painted ſepulchres, which preſent in a manner, nothing to poſterity but their owne ruines, and their Founders weakneſſe. Nevertheleſſe, from this officious care of *Achitophels* children towards their deceaſed Father, may Chriſtians be taught the reverend reſpect they owe to the aſhes of their dead Anceſtors.

The raiſing up of Monumentall Statues to the memory of others, ought

ought wee rather to interpret the duty of Poſterity, than the ambition of our deceaſed *Parents*: yet in ſuch wiſe, that they ought rather to humble us with the thought of Mortality, than puffe us up with glory of our Parents Nobility. Neither can ſuch Monuments, beſides ſhame and infamy, (if erected to wicked men) expreſſe any other than the common Epitaph of mankinde, *That hee lived, and dyed.* The greateſt Tyrant in the World can command no more: the pooreſt begger can challenge to himſelfe no leſſe.

Hitherto beloved, hath my diſcourſe, ſeconded by your favourable Attention followed *Achitophel* through the by-paths and indirect paſſages of his life and actions from the beginning of his conſpiracy with *Abſolon* to his ſhamefull death and pompous Sepulchre: whoſe

whoſe ſtory deſerves a more able diſcovery than my poore deſcription, out of all theſe circumſtances will miniſter this one true and undoubted Corolary: *That honeſty is the beſt policy.* When worldly policy commonly hides herſelfe in darkneſſe, and *Proteus* like, transformes herſelfe into a thouſand ſhapes to avoid diſcovery; this one onely dares boldly adventure in the light, and juſtifie all her actions: this one covets no other likeneſſe than her owne, as not aſhmed to preſent her face to view and cenſure: Finally, this alone is ſufficient to preſerve a competent eſtate in this life, and after death advance us to Chriſts glorious Kingdom, where wee ſhall reigne with him for ever amongſt the Saints in Heaven: To which unſpeakable joy and bliſſe the Lord for his mercy ſend us, for the

the Merits of his Sonne IESUS CHRIST: to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed all glory, power, and praiſe now and for evermore,

Amen.

Deo Trinilaus in æternum.

FINIS.